



Councillor backs police to catch 'mindless' yobs

A COUNCILLOR is confident police officers in Welshpool will put an end to "mindless vandalism" after windows were broken at a primary school.

Since the start of 2018 police officers have dealt with almost 20 incidents of vandalism at various locations around the town with businesses having windows smashed

and the town's football ground targeted. The latest incident saw windows smashed at the former Ardwyn School site, now known as Ysgol Gymraeg Y Trallwng. It is the second time in a month the school has been targeted.

Some offenders have been apprehended. However, Dyfed-Powys Police have stepped up patrols in the

area following the spike in vandalism. Powys County Councillor Phil Pritchard believes the offences are down to a couple of "mindless idiots" and is confident police officers will put an end to the problem.

He said: "This has become a major problem in Welshpool, we haven't seen anything like this before. Schools are a place children go to

learn and they shouldn't be turning up to school to see broken windows everywhere. The town council works hard to keep the streets clean and tidy and the police work hard to keep us safe.

"I am sure everyone like myself will want these one or two idiots caught as soon as possible, and I'm confident the local police will be able

to put a stop to these offences sooner rather than later."

Various businesses have been targeted around the town and earlier this year town councillors decided to take action to tackle vandalism at the town's Maesdyre football ground.

They agreed to invest £500 to install security cameras following the spate of attacks.

EDUCATION

School marches on as it retains its good rating

THE Marches School in Oswestry has maintained its good rating following a recent visit from Ofsted inspectors.

The school received a good rating following its last inspection in 2014 and since then there has been a number of personnel changes including that of associate headteacher Alison Pearson.

The new report, which comes after a short inspection last month, says "leadership responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear" and that the sixth form provision is now well-established.

Mrs Pearson said: "As a school, we are extremely happy with the result of the recent Ofsted inspection."

"The improvements we have made as a school are testament to the hard work and determination of staff, pupils and parents."

The latest inspection found a number of strong improvements across the school and the report states the level of ambition that leaders and governors have for the pupils is excellently displayed with the whole school ethos of "achievement through caring".

The report also says that the school in general has a positive, calm and orderly atmosphere during lessons.

UNCERTAINTY ON UNIT 'MUST END'

Report by Jonny Drury

A LEADING health campaigner says consultation on the future of Oswestry's maternity unit needs to happen now – because a potential three-month wait is unfair on expectant mothers.



Paul Milner

Maternity units in Oswestry, Ludlow and Bridgnorth have been subject to temporary closures numerous times over the last year.

Health bosses revealed last week that it is unlikely consultation on the future of the service will take place in the next three months – and it could be potentially another six months before a review begins.

Shropshire Councillor Paul Milner, a health campaigner who has been fighting to keep maternity services in Oswestry, said more delays to the key review will only increase the uncertainty among expectant mothers. He said: "I was disappointed that it could take up to six months for anything to take place. I hope it certainly doesn't take as long as it did for Future Fit. It isn't fair on mothers. It will only serve to increase the uncertainty among mothers and in turn they will be choosing to go to Wrexham and Shrewsbury to give birth."

Councillor Milner also insisted that taking birthing services away from Oswestry – which has been suggested by health bosses – isn't the answer. He said: "Oswestry isn't getting any smaller, it is the second largest town in Shropshire and the people of Oswestry deserve services like this. The consultation should be now, but when it does eventually come I would urge anyone to have their say because it will affect a lot of families in the area."

● Months – See Page 5

Artist Charlie has first solo exhibition - aged just 10



Charlie Miller, 10, with his work that is on display at Zest Hairdressers in Shrewsbury. Photo: John Sambrooks.

AN artist has had a collection of his work put on display in his first solo exhibition – at the age of just 10.

Charlie Miller has been receiving accolades for his artwork for the last four years and has previously had paintings featured at the National Gallery.

The schoolboy, who lives in Penybontfawr, was invited to display some of his pictures at Zest hair salon in Shrewsbury after his striking style caught the eye of salon owner Mi-

chael Wrate. Charlie's mother Jan, a regular client at Zest, was paying for a hair cut when Michael noticed one of Charlie's paintings on her phone. Two collections of Charlie's work are now covering the walls of the salon, a total of around 50 pictures. They were hand-picked by Michael from a folder of more than 150.

The first series depicts political figures from around the world, produced when Charlie was just eight.

His more recent work, completed mostly

when he was nine, was inspired by wooden religious head statues he saw on a family holiday to Barcelona. After Michael put the pictures up in the salon, Charlie decided to produce a picture of him in each of the two styles.

Charlie's mum is also his art teacher at Moreton Hall School near Oswestry, while his uncle is an amateur photographer whose latest series of bird images has inspired Charlie's next big project.

EMERGENCY

Pedestrian dies in road tragedy

A 30-year-old man died when he was hit by a car at a roundabout near Oswestry.

People gave the pedestrian CPR after the collision at the Gobowen roundabout on the A5 Oswestry bypass at about 9.30pm on Monday.

West Midlands Ambulance Service said: "Crews arrived to find a man who was in cardiac arrest following a collision with a car and was receiving CPR by passers-by."

"Ambulance staff quickly took over resuscitation efforts but, sadly, nothing could be done to save the man."

INSIDE

A tail that really takes the Bizkit!



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Most local MPs back May over air strikes in Syria

Report by Keri Trigg

ALL but one of Shropshire's MPs have come out in support of Theresa May's decision to authorise air strikes on Syria.

The prime minister gave the go-ahead for missiles to be launched in a joint effort with the US and France, in response to the apparent use of chemical weapons on the rebel-held city of Douma by the Assad regime.

Daniel Kawczynski, MP for Shrewsbury and Aitcham, is the only MP in the region to voice his disagreement with the move.

He said MPs should have the final say on launching air strikes, rather than the prime minister going for a "knee-jerk reaction".

But not everyone agrees.

Telford MP Lucy Allan said she "fully supports the PM's actions and leadership", while North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson said: "I approve of the bombings, and I'm happy for the Prime Minister to get on with it."

Ludlow MP Philip Dunne and The Wrekin's Mark Pritchard have also backed Mrs May's actions.

Mr Dunne said: "I support the decision by the PM to join carefully calibrated precision military strikes to degrade Syrian chemical weapons capacities, after Assad had claimed to have destroyed such weapons, then used them on his own people."

Mr Pritchard said: "I fully support the Prime Minister. Chemical weapons cannot be used with impunity. However, I do hope the conflict in Syria will end with a diplomatic and political solution rather than an escalation of violence."

Over the border in Montgomeryshire, Glyn Davies MP said: "It is important that Assad receives a message that the use of chemical weapons is not acceptable."

At a meeting last week Oswestry and District Labour Party members expressed their "grave concerns" about the situation. Members said: "We wish to express our opposition to the military involvement of the UK in Syria and advocate diplomacy and talks as a better means of resolving the conflict."

Company teams up with TV gardener



Clives Knowles from the British Ironwork Centre and TV gardener and presenter Alan Titchmarsh

THE transformation of a children's hospital garden by TV gardener Alan Titchmarsh has been given a helping hand by an Oswestry firm.

The ITV show "Love Your Garden", has been transforming the garden at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

Producers contacted the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry to see if it could supply some larger than life, flower ornaments to give all year round colour to the garden.

Workers were happy to produce the sculp-

tors for the project, that has been underway at the hospital in recent weeks.

Centre chairman Clive Knowles said it had been wonderful to be involved in the garden that children at the hospital will be able to enjoy and use.

"We took on the responsibility of creating larger than life bright colourful flowers," he said.

"We've actually been working with the ITV team for some years now. This project was of immediate interest and we hope to

have injected some bright summer colour, to really make a splash at the hospital.

"Alan was delighted with the results and we hope to be working in collaboration with the Love Your Garden team again soon."

Mr Knowles said that producers from the show were expected to be visiting the ironwork centre soon to explore new projects for the near future.

Work on the hospital garden also saw the involvement of Manchester Police and the Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

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Young yobs ordered away from beauty spot

TEN youths were ordered away from a beauty spot after police set up a CCTV camera in a bid to catch vandals.

A gang of youngsters have been throwing stones at houses, shouting through letter boxes and throwing food at locals in Whittington, near Oswestry, police said. West Mercia Police set up a mobile CCTV camera in the village in a bid to put an end to the problem and have also stepped up patrols.

West Mercia Police said that on Saturday 10 youths were moved off ground at Whittington Castle.

Oswestry Inspector Tracey Ryan said: "We're still monitoring this situation, and we know it isn't youths from the village, it is youngsters coming in from outside the village."

"We have installed CCTV and have some images and we are trying to identify the culprits in those images."

"We have tried the soft approach by trying to move people on and it hasn't work so we may need to step up action."

"Patrols have been stepped up in the area and we hope this will put some residents at ease." Last month it was said vulnerable people in the village were being made to feel like hostages in their own homes as youngsters from outside the village were throwing stones and shouting through letter boxes.

Green Man will be in the spotlight

THE April meeting of The Arts Society Mid Wales & Borders (formerly NADFAS) will take place on Thursday next week.

The speaker is Dr David Bostwick, whose topic is The Green Man In Art And Myth.

The venue is The Royal Oak Hotel, Welshpool. The meeting will begin at 2.30pm prompt.

British soldier jailed for possessing gas canister

Report by David Banner

A SERVING British soldier and self-confessed racist convicted of having a banned CS gas canister has been jailed.

Corporal Mikko Vehvilainen, who stockpiled a host of legally held weaponry, pleaded guilty to possession of the spray, which he kept in the drawer of a home he was renovating in Llansilin near Oswestry.

The 33-year-old also kept a photograph at the property which showed him giving a Nazi-type salute at a memorial to his native Finland's independence.

Sentencing him to 12 months for the offence, Judge Melbourne Inman QC, the Recorder of Birmingham, said Vehvilainen had a "long and deep-seated adherence" to racist ideology. Vehvilainen, of the Royal Anglian Regiment, was cleared following a trial of having a copy of a terrorist document - namely white nationalist mass murderer Anders Breivik's manifesto, the European Declaration of Independence.

The Army trainer and Afghan veteran was also cleared of two counts of stirring up racial hatred in forum posts on the website Christogenea.org.

The married father-of-three was arrested on September 5, 2017 at his family accommodation at Sennybridge Camp Army base in Brecon. When detained, he told his wife: "I'm being arrested for being a patriot".

Pavlos Panyai QC, the soldier's barrister, told the trial jury it was "not in dispute he is a racist" but that it was not criminal, by itself, to hold such views.

Also sentenced was a 23-year-old male, who cannot be named for legal reasons, after he was convicted at the same trial of possession of two terrorist documents and distributing another.

He was jailed for three-and-a-half years for the offences, to run concurrently.

A third man, also of the Royal Anglians, Private Mark Barrett, 23, of Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland, Leicestershire, was acquitted of membership of the banned extreme far right terrorist group, National Action.

New beds add to patient comfort



Linda Head, moving and handling co-ordinator, patient Martin Griffiths and Martin Davies from Linet

aged from 10 years upwards, with a few of the oldest manual beds being more than 25 years old.

Linda Head, moving and handling co-ordinator, said the beds will greatly improve patients' comfort, while they are in hospital. A key driving force in the purchase of the beds, Linda said: "This investment reaffirms the trust's commitment to providing the highest standard of

care for our patients. The right beds will assist in providing a safe environment for our patients, improve clinical efficacy and help reduce the risk of injuries to both patients and staff."

The beds were supplied by Linet, a specialist hospital beds, mattresses and nursing care equipment provider, who also helped with the installation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Something fishy going on with van

MEN acting suspiciously have been seen in villages near Oswestry selling fish door-to-door, police officers have warned.

Residents took to social media on Thursday last week to warn a white van was travelling in the Criftings and Weston Rhyn area with two occupants acting suspiciously.

West Mercia Police's safer neighbourhood team for Oswestry, in a statement, said: "We are having reports of suspicious vehicles in the area of Weston Rhyn, Chirk Bank and Gobowen."

"If you have any information please contact us via 101."

Health equipment training on offer

A PARISH council is holding a defibrillator training session at its annual general meeting.

Pant and Llanymynech Parish Council's meeting will take place on Thursday next week at 7.30pm in Pant Memorial Hall.

At the meeting, members of the public can go along and train on how to use the new defibrillators in the village. All are welcome and light refreshments will be served.

Spiritual group to meet up again

OSWESTRY Spiritual Centre members welcome back Lynda Child to host their demonstration of clairvoyance this evening (Thursday).

The meeting takes place at the Cambrian Room in the Memorial Hall in Oswestry at 7.30pm with the doors open at 7pm.

The cost is £3.50. Free taster spiritual and reiki healing sessions are available after the demonstration.

Everyone will be made welcome.

Spring festival trip

TREFONEN Garden Club is visiting the Malvern Spring Festival. Details of people wishing to go need to be given to the next group meeting, held this evening (Thursday).

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Mavis Humby

Dedicated foster carer writes book

MAVIS Humby and her husband Patrick spent four decades as foster carers, looking after more than 100 children, from babies to teenagers. Now Mrs Humby, of Oswestry, has written a book about her life caring for 'Other People's Children'. The couple's first foster child

stepped over their threshold when their own son and daughter were just three and four years old. There then followed 40 years of welcoming children into their home, many of them frightened and needing reassurance. Some stayed a few months, some

stayed many years, all given a loving family home. Mrs Humby, 77, said there could be up to five foster children at one time, growing up with their own two children. Speaking when they retired from foster caring in 2013 she said: "We

have been really fortunate in seeing many of them grow up to be parents themselves. "If I had a chance I would do it all over again." Mrs Humby's book 'Other People's Children' is available from Amazon.

Staff survey finds care at hospital is joint best

Report by Jonny Drury

CARE provided at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital has been ranked joint top in the country following an NHS staff survey.

A total of 93 per cent of staff at the hospital agreed or strongly agreed they would be happy with the standard of care provided if a friend or relative needed treatment.

The hospital's score was only matched by the Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital and The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre on The Wirral. Hospital chief executive Mark Brandreth said: "I have always known that our staff are truly extraordinary, but this survey data also shows that they recognise the quality of care they provide."

Safety warning after collision

POLICE have issued a warning alongside CCTV footage of a child being knocked over by car near a school.

Officers in Oswestry released the footage of an incident that happened on Upper Church Street in the town.

It shows a car strike a young pupil who is walking into the centre of Oswestry from The Marches School. The car stops after hitting the girl while she was in the road. The girl appears to have avoided any injuries.

The incident happened several weeks ago, but officers say they want pupils to be aware of the danger of busy roads in the town.

Oswestry SNT posted the footage on their Twitter page, with a warning saying: "Upper Church Street. Marches pupils on their way home, beware of your surroundings and traffic." Watch the CCTV footage at shropshirestar.com.

Audiences flock to see Ruth



Actress, screenwriter and author Ruth Jones was in Oswestry to talk about her work

ACTRESS and screenwriter Ruth Jones was in Oswestry to promote her debut novel in front of two sell-out audiences.

The writer and star of the hit comedy Gavin and Stacey and Sky One's Stella appeared at the Wynnstay Hotel in Oswestry on Thursday evening last week.

Due to a high demand in tickets, the actress also appeared for a second sell-out event on Friday afternoon.

The event was held by Oswestry's Booka Bookshop, which has welcomed a host of high profile names to the town in recent

years to promote their books. Meanwhile, Simon Mayo and Jacqueline Wilson are the latest authors set to visit Oswestry thanks to Booka Bookshop.

Simon Mayo will visit Oswestry to talk about his new book Mad Blood Stirring on Monday next week at the Wynnstay Hotel.

Jacqueline Wilson will visit Oswestry on June 9. The event at the Wynnstay will begin at 11am with doors open at 10.15am. She will talk about her writing career, her best loved characters and her new book, Rose Rivers.

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Consultation on maternity plans 'still months away'

Report by Lisa O'Brien

THERE is little chance of a public consultation launching on the future of Shropshire's maternity services in the next three months, health bosses have announced.

NHS England wants the West Midlands Clinical Senate to declare the plans clinically sound before giving the go-ahead for a public consultation to begin.

The consultation will consider proposals to shake-up maternity services and end births at the rural midwife-led units in Oswestry, Ludlow and Bridgnorth.

Boy injured in attack outside shop

A 15-year-old boy was attacked by a teenager who got out of a Range Rover in Oswestry armed with a rounders bat.

The victim was standing outside the Co-op in Cabin Lane when the assault happened. He was punched in the eye by his assailant before he was able to run off.

Police say the attack happened on Tuesday, March 27, at about 8pm.

Pc Jason Tierney said the 15-year-old boy was standing opposite the shop when a black Range Rover pulled alongside him.

A young man got out of the vehicle and punched the boy in the eye, causing bruising. The victim then ran off from the scene. He did not require hospital treatment.

Police say the attacker is described as a white male, between 17-19 years old, with black hair. He was wearing a black jacket and was holding what was believed to be a rounders bat.

Pc Tierney said: "We are currently investigating this offence, which took place in a busy part of Oswestry. We would ask anyone who witnessed the incident or recognises the description of the offender or the vehicle to please come forward."

"If you have any information, please call West Mercia Police on 101, quoting incident reference 6875 of March 27, 2018."

Mark determined to cross line



Mark with his children Flynn and Lyra is ready for the marathon challenge

MARK Swallow was just a mile away from the finish line of the London Marathon last year when he collapsed with heat exhaustion, a devastating end to months of training.

He is so determined to get his medal he has dusted himself off and repeated the gruelling training schedule ready for this year's event on Sunday.

Mark, 43, from Montgomery near Welshpool, now believes he has learnt enough since his first ill-fated marathon attempt to complete the course this time.

A father to Flynn, nine, and Lyra, seven, he is running in aid of the children's charity Barnardo's Cymru.

He says he remembers little about the end to his marathon in 2017.

He said: "My wife Lucy had waved me on at 24.5 miles but at 25 miles I collapsed. I knew nothing about it until I woke up in the medical tent. Since then I've learnt how to keep myself cool and this year I'll be making sure I pour a lot of water over myself while I'm on the course."

"It has been quite tough getting back into training, but despite the way my first marathon ended it was still a wonderful experience. I think the runners get through the first half on euphoria alone."

People can support Mark at uk.virgin-moneygiving.com/MarkSwallow3.

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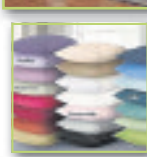
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BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

It's taken a long time for the penny to drop but at last Powys County Council has recognised why more and more companies no longer use its trade waste and recycling services – the council's been charging too much.

Competitors have been creeping under the council's radar and undercutting the authority and Powys has been wrongly blaming the reasons on closed businesses and accessibility.

Now the council has recognised the real reason. It's not competitive or flexible enough and businesses have been leaving in their droves, which wasn't really rocket science to anyone with any kind of a business interest. So the good news is that the council now intends to re-design its trade waste and recycling services to compete, which can only be good news for the businesses affected in the county. And any "re-design" must mean a reduction in costs which should in turn lead to new customers and more profit.

This is a real sign that the council has recognised a need to produce new revenue streams and has woken up to the fact that in the real world the private sector can produce matching services at a lower cost while still producing a profit. It's also a sign of new thinking on the cabinet.

Will this be the first of many new initiatives to be announced by Powys County Council? Are there others areas where the council's expertise can be more profitably utilised? Is this the dawning of a new era for local government in Powys?

Well, at least it's a start. After all business waste collection is worth in excess of £1million for Powys County Council, so it's an income that the authority simply can't afford to see eroded any more. And with £17 million worth of savings required in the next financial year there will need to be a lot more bright ideas. If you've got one let the council know.

Four to five days seems a long while to refill a swimming pool but that's just how long it took Freedom Leisure to get things back to normal after the mysterious disappearance of water at Welshpool's Flash Leisure Centre.

Swimmers were left high and dry as Freedom Leisure offered apologies for the pool being closed last week with bosses saying that water levels had significantly dropped with legislation meaning they could not refill quickly. Or did someone inadvertently pull the plug out? I don't think we're being told the full story on this one.



Anthony Bangham has issued a speeding warning



Are signs enough to slow speeders down?



Should every speeder be punished?

Should speeders be hit in the pocket or educated?

How do we deal with speeders? A fine every time or education? DOMINIC ROBERTSON reports

WE'VE all heard it – the indignant, injustice-laced exclamation of a friend who has totted up their latest speeding fine: "I was only doing 35 in a 30..."

The comments are mostly met with sympathetic responses. A lot of drivers freely admit to breaking the speed limits on a daily basis, and are pretty empathetic about the prospect of an appointment with the constabulary.

After all, were you to retrospectively punish everyone who drove to work this morning it is likely that a large part of the country would be counting out the pennies to pay a speeding fine.

But, the law is the law, and the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police Anthony Bangham has raised that very issue. Should drivers who break the law expect to get away with it? Should motorists face some form of punishment for exceeding the speed limit, even by the smallest of margins?

It is a debate that has got people talking. Not least Mr Bangham and his police and crime commissioner John Campion. Both are totally united in their desire to tackle the issue, but appear to have slightly different views on how to go about it.

Speaking as the National Police Chiefs' Federation lead on road policy at the Police Federation Roads Policing Conference, Mr Bangham suggested it could be time



The police are doing their best to slow down the speeding motorists

to do away with let-offs for motorists who transgress the '10 per cent' buffer on speeding offences.

The move would represent a significant departure, with the 10 per cent buffer almost indelibly etched in motorists' minds.

Current guidance suggests police forces should only issue penalties for drivers caught at 10 per cent plus 2mph over the limit – 35mph in a 30mph zone, for example. Instead Mr Bangham suggested that anyone caught up to 10 per cent above the limit could be sent on a speed awareness course – which can cost between £75 and £100 depending on where you live.

He said: "Let's change the message – we are proud to be law enforcers."

"I do not want the public to be sur-

prised, I want them to be embarrassed when they are caught. They should not come whining to us about getting caught."

The chief constable said police have become "apologetic" about laws made to stop people being killed. Speaking following the conference he said: "Nationally on average five people are killed and 66 are seriously injured every day on the roads, and these numbers are on the rise."

"I fear we've become apologetic about enforcing laws designed to prevent people being killed or injured. I want us to do more to proactively detect people driving using a mobile or speeding on high harm routes, and be clear that they can expect to be stopped and could receive the full penalty."

"As an example, anything from 31mph onwards is over the speed limit and the options for a police response – a speed awareness course, fixed penalty notice or attendance at court – are discretionary based on the circumstances. My message to drivers is: don't assume you have a free pass if you're over the limit."

The real-world ramifications of introducing stricter policing on speed limits are however unpredictable. The prospect of losing access to a vital part of life for a handful of minor offences would seem draconian to the majority.

And that is something reflected by the county's police and crime commissioner, John Campion, who said that education rather than severe punishment is more likely to stop drivers being injured or killed. He said: "Too many people are being killed or seriously injured on our roads. Changing driver behaviour through education, supported by enforcement, is key to making our roads safer rather than just criminalising more drivers through draconian speed enforcement."

"There is an important difference between 'more enforcement', and 'tougher enforcement' of our laws. I think our communities have a legitimate expectation that their police will enforce the law in a proportionate and pragmatic way."

"I fully support more enforcement in line with community expectations and I will continue to provide West Mercia Police with significant resources to do this."

So should the county's motorists be that much more vigilant as they make their way to work tomorrow?

The answer is that they should be anyway, but any change in policing is not likely to arrive yet, although as Mr Bangham made clear, he is putting drivers on notice that breaking the law is not a "free pass".

WORKING FOR YOU



Last week, three of the five permanent members of the Security Council joined forces to conduct coordinated targeted military strikes to degrade the Syrian regime's chemical weapons capability, and deter their use. The principle partner, delivering about 90% of the bombardment, was the US. Britain and France played smaller roles, but their involvement was crucial to reinforce the message that the use of chemical weapons is contrary to the Chemical Weapons Convention and not acceptable in today's world. The action was supported by a wide range of countries, including all NATO members plus Australia, Turkey and others. The military strike was in response to a despicable and barbaric act by the Syrian regime in Douma, killing innocent people who were seeking shelter from bombardment in underground basements.

There is little doubt that the Syrian regime led by dictator Bashar al-Assad was responsible. It has an utterly abhorrent record of using poison gas against its own people. Over recent years there have been numerous examples of chemical weapon use by the forces of the Syrian dictator. For a century, use of chemical weapons has been banned as a crime against humanity. Assad is in flagrant breach of international law. The use of chemical weapons must be stopped. Every reform in the Security Council has failed, thwarted by the Russian veto. The leaders of the US, France and the UK have done what they had to do.

Before acting, the UK Prime Minister and Cabinet considered advice from the Attorney General, the National Security Advisor and Chief of Staff and received a full intelligence briefing. There is no desire to intervene in a civil war. There is no desire or intention to deliver regime change. It was a 'Limited, Targeted and Effective' strike with clear boundaries designed to avoid escalation and civilian casualties. The aim is to prevent future use of chemical weapons. In 2013, David Cameron sought support from MPs to launch a military strike against Damascus in response to Assad's use of poison gas. MPs refused to agree. I thought that a mistake, which led to President Obama cancelling any action at all. Last year the US did respond to another poison gas attack with a limited military response. It did not stop Assad. We must hope that last weekend's military strike will have more effect.

Glyn Davies
Montgomeryshire MP

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Austerity policy has failed vulnerable

THE Tory policy of austerity, or 'death by a thousand cuts', has failed and ordinary people in Shropshire are suffering.

Let's take examples. A local paper detailed how Ludlow Food Bank shows a "jump" from 163 cases in 2016 to 206 in 2017; the coordinator says: "The financial problems are occurring for people in work", often linked to the in-work benefits system.

The Shropshire Star says: "The number

of buses on roads in Shropshire has dropped by almost a quarter in the past four years", making the county "the third worst in England for loss of bus routes" with "cuts in public funding" blamed.

A report by the Longevity Science Panel concludes that: "The life expectancy gap between rich and poor has widened", reaching 8.4 years between rich and poor neighbourhoods; "Income inequality was the biggest factor", it adds. Research by the Trades

Union Congress shows that "one in seven children whose parents work in public sector jobs now live below the breadline, an increase of 40 per cent in eight years".

Sixty per cent of those receiving benefits are in work. We now have a low wage, low skilled economy where many struggle to survive, only the rich prosper and services are drastically diminished.

**TREVOR INNES
Ludlow**

Beauty queen Suzanne was guest at dinner



Shropshire's own Miss United Kingdom, Suzanne Younger from St Martins, was a guest at Oswestry Borough Council's civic dinner in April 1989. Chief guest at the dinner was MP Denis Howell, left, who together with the Mayor Councillor Trevor Davies congratulated Suzanne on winning her United Kingdom title.

Common sense has gone out the window right here

SHROPSHIRE emerges as one of the most expensive places to live, with the worst public transport, dire shortage of affordable housing, an ageing population, school, shop, bank, church, and pub closures.

However, all these problems would not exist were we not hampering with planning licensing and other negative regulations, propped up by vested interests, which keep things out of reach to ordinary hard-working people.

Common sense would say the council could provide public mobile home sites for local people, instead of allowing such facilities to be allocated for tourists, or run by Rachman-like landlords, who force tenants to buy a new unit every 10 years, but the planners, agents, and money lenders say no!

School buses run in remote areas morning and afternoon, so why not utilise them for public transport in the day? People with 4x4s could pick up passengers, but taxi licensing says otherwise.

**W F KERSWELL
Picklecott**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Readers' Letters,
The Chronicle,
14 Salop Road,
Oswestry, SY11 2NU

EMAIL

ian.stjohn@
shropshirestar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Hospital workers should use bikes

I READ the interesting stories about hospital staff car parking at Royal Shrewsbury and Princess Royal hospitals.

An alternative would be to use the bus services available or, even better, to cycle to work.

When I was a student nurse in Glasgow, I cycled a good many miles to and from the hospital.

It was cheap and good exercise in all weathers. It was quite relaxing after a busy shift too.

**ROGER DUNSHEA
Whitchurch**

Homes developers should make use of British plants

WE'VE all noticed a dramatic increase in development in and around our towns over the past few years.

Developers are required to incorporate some areas of open and green space within their plans, which is great.

These areas very often include grass, trees and planting which make the developments more pleasant - also great.

However much of the planting used is non-native. Foreign species, which can be attractive, but serve very little benefit to wildlife and the local ecology. British plants support British wildlife much better than foreign ones. This is because British animals have evolved to live off native plants and insects.

Planning authorities can use their power over developers very easily to specify that developers have to use only native species in their planting schemes. This will maximise the benefit of the planned green space to wildlife and benefit British nurseries.

**REV PAUL O'BREIN
Stafford**

There's a lot to be learned by looking at our history

SOME recent historians, certain parts of deepest Islington and some past German ambassadors have all complained that the UK spends too much time looking back to the two world wars

But how can you understand the modern UK without looking back to two events that changed the UK so radically in every aspect of its life? The only exception where nothing has ever changed since the Romans invaded is the House of Lords.

Take something as mundane as food.

The Second World War was from 1939 to 1945, but food rationing which was introduced in 1940 did not end until 1954.

Is it any wonder that after 14 years of rationing that those that could afford it started to eat more and welcomed ready meals?

As for Europe there is the feeling amongst some that the UK and its Empire ran itself into the ground and incurred huge debts helping to save Europe during World War Two, for little thanks.

Of course you have to acknowledge that many parts of the Empire had no choice on whether they wanted to join the conflict.

When the fighting was over the Americans pulled some of their loans to the UK, having got some territories in exchange for loans early in the conflict and trying to start their own empire.

This sudden withdrawal on money gave the 1945 Labour Government a big financial headache after all their election promises.

The current Labour Party's most recent political broadcast was promising yet again to cure the ills of the nation with huge piles of money, but alas no mention of where it was coming from. Sell Islington to the Americans maybe?

**PETER STEGGLES
Longnor**

Responses to plastic issue

SADLY it seems to fall to me to have to point out the absurdity of some of the knee-jerk responses to Mr Attenborough and his whale playing with a bucket.

There are those who have now rushed off to promote the return to the glass milk bottle from the plastic ones which are now most common.

A one-pint glass bottle weighs 240 grams, a four-pint plastic bottle weighs 40 grams and so that means that per pint, milk in glass requires 24 times as much packaging to be transported to the bottling plant, to the customer and back.

Plastic milk bottles are recycled through almost every council operation.

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Dundee, Angus & Glamis Castle

This compact city claims to be the sunniest in Scotland and the closest city to the spectacular countryside. It is home to many historical buildings, two famous ships as well as boutiques and museums, and its waterfront development is due to be finalised in 2018. Our tour includes a visit to the spectacular Glamis Castle plus excursions throughout Angus and Perthshire.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Dogs are seized by police officers

TWO dogs suspected of being pit bull cross breeds have been seized by police officers in Mid Wales.

The dogs were seized from an address in Llanfair Caereinion near Welshpool after officers were tipped off about them being advertised on social media. Police officers executed a warrant under the Dangerous Dogs Act and the animals are now being kept in kennels while tests are carried out to confirm their breed.

If they are found to be pit bulls the owners will be prosecuted.

Sergeant Tom Marshall said: "We received information that pit bull-type dogs were advertised for sale via social media. We were sent photographs of the dogs, and this resulted in the application for a warrant under the Dangerous Dogs Act."

Village institute arranges events

A SERIES of events are set to be held by Weston Rhyn Village Institute committee over the coming months.

On April 28 there will be a quiz starting at 7.30pm and entry is £3 per person and people are invited to bring along their own drinks.

And on the day of the Royal Wedding between Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the committee is holding an event at the Last Inn at Henged.

Tickets are £12 and the event will include a glass of champagne, breakfast, competitions and a special raffle while people watch the big event on screens.

Afternoon tea will also be available for an extra charge and tickets are available from The Last Inn, Top Shop in Weston Rhyn and via committee members. Call for more details on (01691) 239087.

Report outlines impact of planned estate traffic

Report by Sue Austin

TRAFFIC from a 150-home estate will be able to use a new road through an adjoining development – cutting down the amount of vehicles using residential roads.

A traffic management scheme produced for an application to build the houses off Middleton Road, Oswestry, says the new estate will not cause significant disruption to local roads.

Residents who live near to the site say that local roads are already choked and say the extra traffic will make matters worse.

Jennings Estates Ltd wants to build the homes as part of the Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension. A highways impact assessment for the company says the extra homes will generate about 85 extra car journeys each morning and evening rush hour. With an adjoining scheme for about 600 homes recently granted planning permission the document says that much of the traffic will use its spine road which will exit onto a new roundabout on Shrewsbury Road and then the Mile End island on the Oswestry bypass. Resident Sue Stewart has written to Shropshire Council saying drivers will still use the Middleton Road and Cabin Lane alternative. This, she says, will turn nearby residential roads such as Aston Way and Prince Charles Road into rat runs.

Mrs Stewart said many drivers looked to avoid the section of Cabin Lane that has speed humps by using the smaller, residential roads.

Shropshire Council will consider the planning application for the 150 homes at a future date.

Plea for patience made to motorists



The special safety sign which has been installed at the roadworks

HIGHWAYS bosses have urged motorists to be patient as work continues to install traffic lights at an accident hotspot.

Work began in March to install traffic lights on the Maesbury Road junction in Oswestry, an area that has been notorious for crashes in recent years.

The work will take up to five months and has been causing major tailbacks with traffic lights in the north and south-bound direction. The road leading to Maesbury out of Oswestry is also closed.

While the tailbacks continue to frustrate commuters, Highways England has asked people to be patient and a special sign has been installed to remind motorists to drive safely near the roadworks.

The sign was designed by a young artist, and says: 'Better late than dead on time'.

James Wildman from Highways England said work was on course to finish before the summer holidays and added: "Safety is at the heart of what we do and the sign, designed by a young artist, acts as a reminder to motorists."

"Work at the Maesbury Road junction continues and we'd like to thank people for their patience while this takes place."

Accessibility issues are the focus of new town plan

WELSHPOOL Town Council is consulting on a new plan to make the town more accessible to people with disabilities.

The authority has drawn up an "access for all plan" to ensure that every area of the town is accessible to people who suffer with different types of disabilities.

Parts of the plan include policies to make sure all pavements are clear for wheelchair access, new facilities have disabled access, dropped kerbs are at the appropriate level and to keep footpaths suitable for wheelchairs.

The plan was developed by the council in consultation with Dementia Friendly Welshpool and Councillor Folkert Veenstra, who is himself in a wheelchair. He has been in a wheelchair since 2009 after suffering with a condition that causes his muscle strength to weaken. He was elected to the council last year and is keen for the plan to be adopted so access is equal to all people in the town.

He said: "I think this plan would be great because it would help give everyone the same access to things around the town, as quite a large number of people struggle with getting around or have some sort of disability."

"The plan is much bigger than helping just people with disabilities, it is aimed at elderly people and is to help people who have less money and help them have access to services they may not have access to."

The plan can be found on the council web site at welshpooltowncouncil.gov.uk or a copy can be obtained from the Tourist Information Centre.

All comments should be emailed to wtccouncil@btinternet.com or posted to Triangle House, Union Street, Welshpool, SY21 7P by April 30.

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Man admits committing sex offences against girls

A TEENAGER has changed his plea and admitted a series of sexual offences against schoolgirls.

Kieran Mark Goodwin had previously pleaded not guilty and a trial was due to be held next month.

But he appeared via a live television link from custody at Mold Crown Court last week and his barrister Simon Rogers asked that the charges be put to him again.

He changed his pleas to guilty.

Goodwin, 19, of Little Henfaes Drive, Welshpool, pleaded guilty to 23 offences of causing a child to watch a sexual act, inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, and facilitating the commission of a child sex offence.

He also admitted one charge of common assault.

And he admitted two charges of damaging iphones.

One further charge of sexual activity with a child which he denied was allowed to remain on the file at the request of prosecuting barrister John Philpotts.

He had previously admitted further charges which will all be sentenced at the same time.

Judge Rhys Rowlands, who was told that there were eight complainants, adjourned the case for a full pre-sentence report to be prepared on Goodwin.

He told Goodwin that he would receive credit for his guilty pleas.

But he added: "You will appreciate that these are very serious matters."

"There can only be a custodial sentence and it will be of some length."

Goodwin was remanded in custody pending his sentence on May 24.

Victim impact statements will be finalised at that stage, the court was told.

Work on substance misuse unit to start

Report by Jonny Drury

BUILDING work will soon begin on converting a former bank into a substance misuse centre.

Earlier this year, Powys County Council, working on behalf of the Powys Substance Misuse Area Planning Board, secured the former TSB bank in Severn Road in Welshpool, to convert into a centre to treat people with alcohol and drugs issues.

The service, delivered by Kaleidoscope, is currently provided from the Armoury Building on Brook Street.

However it will now move, thanks to £300,000 worth of Welsh Government funding.

Now planning permission and listed building consent has been given to make alterations, work is set to get under way imminently.

Councillor Stephen Hayes, cabinet member with responsibility for adult social care at Powys County Council, said: "I'm very pleased that we've been able to secure this property, thanks to funding from the Welsh Government."

"It will allow service delivery in Welshpool to be improved in line with national government strategy and ensure it is comparable with other substance misuse bases in Powys that have received capital investments in the past."

In 2016/17, 116 referrals were received by the service in Welshpool, compared with 181 for Newtown, 184 for Brecon and 204 for Llandrindod Wells.

The organisation helps individuals their families and carers, across Powys, and offers a range of support.

Step up and see the repairs to path



Councillor Aled Davies, pictured with Mark Chapman, after work was completed to repair steps at Pistyll Rhaeadr, Llanrhaeadr

THOUSANDS of tourists visiting a beauty spot this year can expect to make a safe passage to the top this summer.

Pistyll Rhaeadr, near Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, is one of Wales's most popular waterfalls.

Powys County Council's countryside services team has overseen repair works to steps leading to the waterfall ahead of a spike in visitors for the summer season.

Last year the footpath had to be closed due to the deteriorating condition.

Work has now taken place ahead of the summer season, and the council's deputy leader and county councillor for the area Aled Davies said: "I'm delighted that walkers visiting Pistyll Rhaeadr will now be able to use this footpath after the steps were repaired."

"This work was not an easy task. The demanding part of the job was the gathering of suitable large replacements stones from the immediate area which required manual handling and transport, sometimes for distances of hundreds of yards."

"Work was completed before the end of February and the path and steps were open in time for the busy Easter holiday period."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Comedy and music at hall

A POET and an Olympic composer will present a night of comedy, music and stories at Rhdydroesau Village Hall later this year.

Poet, broadcaster and comedian Ian McMillan and composer Luke Carver Goss are currently touring with their show, and will be at the village hall near Oswestry on Friday, June 8.

Ian is the 'Bard of Barnsley', and hosts a weekly radio show The Verb, and is the poet in residence for Barnsley FC, and until recently the English National Opera.

Performing alongside him will be composer Luke, who is part of the Carver trio, as well as The Ian McMillan Orchestra.

Tickets for the event are £12.50 and available from Rowan Thorn, Old Chapel Court, Oswestry.

Gallery is set to host performance

SIMON Kempston will be performing live at Oswestry's Willow Gallery on April 28.

The Edinburgh-based award-winning singer-songwriter and acoustic fingerstyle guitarist performs original and contemporary acoustic music, steeped in the traditions of folk, Celtic and blues. Simon has performed to critical acclaim at many major venues, folk/blues clubs and festivals, and has a number of successful and acclaimed albums. This is a rare chance, says the gallery, to enjoy his unique talent.

Tickets cost £10 for adults and £5 for children and can be obtained by calling at the gallery, by calling (01691) 657575, through the gallery's website at willowgalleryoswestry.org or at the door on the night. Start time is 8pm with doors open at 7pm - so early arrivals will have the opportunity to browse the gallery's spring exhibition or, if they wish, enjoy a drink.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Deadline for event soon

THE deadline is fast approaching to take part in this years Montgomery Canal Triathlon.

The event, which takes place on May 19, is open to groups and individuals along 35 miles of the canal.

People who sign up for the event can take on the all three challenges, cycling, walking and canoeing, or they can choose to do just one or two of the sections.

A special slate medallion is given to all entrants, and with the deadline approaching on May 5, anyone interesting in taking part can fill in a form at montgomerycanal.me.uk/fmcevents2018.html.

Police warning on fake news

POLICE have issued a warning to social media users after a fake news scam circulated online about attacks on women in Mid Wales.

Dyfed Powys Police said they have seen an article posted on Facebook that claims attacks on women over 55 in the town of Knighton had prompted the force to encourage women to carry a new safety device.

However, the police have now said the incident contained in the article did not happen, and the post is purely designed to sell safety alarms.

A spokeswoman for the force said: "Please be aware that if these news stories pop up in your newsfeed, they are a scam. No such incident has occurred in Knighton, Powys, so please do not be alarmed. Also, don't be tempted to click on the links to the highlighted safety products."

Health chiefs reveal plans for rural centres

Report by Jonny Drury

A HEALTH board has committed to improving healthcare throughout Powys by creating up to three regional rural centres across the region.

Powys Teaching Health Board says plans are in place to create the centres in north, south and mid Powys, with the facilities offering better joined up healthcare for patients.

The centres will offer secondary care services and take the strain off neighbouring hospital's outside the county who cater for Powys residents. More details will soon be available about the centres and Adrian Osborne of the health board said: "Working with patients and communities across Powys we are developing an ambitious vision for the future of healthcare in the county. The people of Powys made it very clear during this engagement that 'miles matter' - and whilst the sparsely populated rural nature of Powys means our patients rely on district general hospitals outside the county, they would like to see us go further and faster to bring more planned care closer to home. Our vision for the future therefore includes the development of regional rural centres in north, south and mid Powys. Regional rural centres could offer better joined-up healthcare for Powys residents, as well as an opportunity to bring more secondary care services such as day case procedures into Powys from neighbouring district general hospitals."

MP shows his support for local B&Bs



B&B owner Paul Martin with Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies

MONTGOMERYSHIRE MP Glyn Davies celebrated National B&B Day by visiting a local business in Mid Wales.

Mr Davies visited The Forest Country House B&B in Kerry where he met owners Paul and Michelle Martin.

The inaugural National B&B Day was introduced to celebrate the unsung and independent heroes of the UK hospitality sector, with British bed & breakfast's contributing more than £2 billion annually to the UK economy.

During his visit, Mr Davies talked to Paul and Michelle about some of the issues which are hurting the B&B sector, including high business rates in Wales and the domination of online travel booking websites.

The MP said: "It was great to be able to mark the first National B&B Day by visiting Paul and Michelle Martin at their luxury guesthouse, The Forest Country House B&B in Kerry."

"Many small tourist businesses in Wales are hit by high business rate bills, while similar sized England based business are exempt."

Universities' language challenge is spelled out

IMPLEMENTING Welsh language standards will be a challenging journey for universities and further education colleges in Wales, according to Welsh Language Commissioner Meri Huws.

Since the beginning of April, students have had the legal rights to use the Welsh language for the first time.

Among these are rights to a personal tutor who speaks Welsh.

Others include a counselling service, and correspondence such as letters, forms and prospectuses in Welsh.

The language standards, introduced in 2016, already require councils, police forces, fire and rescue services, national parks and the Welsh Government to provide some services bilingually.

Meri Huws said implementing the standards in universities and colleges would not happen overnight.

"This is a journey, it's a challenging journey, it's an exciting journey and I think I should really, really commend the universities and the further education colleges for being prepared to go on that journey," she said.

"Yes, they will have to look at recruiting and training counsellors who can work through the medium of Welsh."

"They will have to change some of their systems, but I've been really, really pleased by their response and how prepared they are to actually engage with us and work with us to make sure that the experience for students is a really positive one."

The language standards now apply to about 100 public bodies in Wales.

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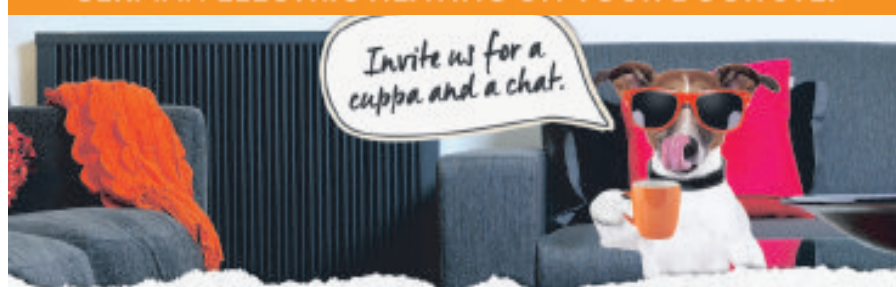
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Continued success at Moreton Hall

11
Oswestry & Border Chronicle Thursday, April 19, 2018

Commercial feature

Moreton Hall continues to stride ahead into the new summer term with national successes, exciting new plans and a continued pizzazz and energy for all things education.

The annual Business Lunch held recently goes from strength to strength, this time welcoming Xavier Rolet, former CEO of The London Stock Exchange Group as the guest speaker.

Guests at the 10th Moreton Business Lunch were given a masterclass in economics by renowned city figure, Xavier Rolet who has recently been named one of the best 100 CEOs in the world.

The delicious lunch catered by the Moreton team was sponsored by Investec for the fifth year running.

Over 350 business guests from a wide range of businesses from Shropshire, Wales and Cheshire attended.

After lunch, 100 Moreton students as well as students from other schools listened to Xavier give a clear and insightful overview of capitalism, renewed nationalism, fragmentation and protectionism, and the rise of China.

Xavier also addressed the thorny issue of increasing competition for Western economies and how there needs to be a greater focus on supporting entrepreneurs and encouraging innovation.

For the meantime, the crowning jewel at Moreton is the plan for the new community theatre with building set to commence in the coming months. The Holroyd Community Theatre will provide new opportunities for people in North Shropshire and the Borders to access the arts, offering surrounding communities an exciting professional programme in drama, dance, music, literary events and cinema.

There is strong groundswell of support for the



Face2Face Performance Academy performs Elf at Theatre Severn recently

theatre and funding of the theatre has already reached over £1.1 million of the total £1.45m needed. The Sponsor a Seat and Founding Patrons Schemes in particular are very popular and 20 per cent of the theatre's seats are already sponsored.

As well as a venue for professional theatre productions, the theatre will be used by community groups, amateur drama societies and arts organisations. It will also be used by

the surrounding primary and secondary state schools which will have access to the theatre as well as teaching, performances and workshops from the Moreton Hall drama department.

Moreton's Face2Face Performance Academy is also keen to expand its growing programme of drama, dance and music theatre, especially after the recent success of 'Elf' at Theatre Severn.

The stage isn't all about drama though. Out

on the pitches, three Moreton students recently represented their countries in the home internationals for lacrosse and two girls have taken centre stage at the International Awards Event for Shropshire Schools Sports and Athletics. The event celebrated rising stars in the national sporting circuit and is designed to reward the most talented young sportspeople.

There's never been a more exciting time at Moreton so come and see what makes it one of



Xavier Rolet speaks at the Moreton Hall Investec Business Lunch

the UK's top performing independent schools and visit their Senior School Open Day on Saturday, April 28. It's the perfect opportunity to take a closer look at the school and its outstanding facilities, meet staff and pupils and learn more about their exceptional examination results.

To find out more, please contact Melissa Evans on evansm@moretonhall.com or register online: www.moretonhall.org/Open-Day

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Concerns over illegal tobacco sale

AN investigation has found the sale of illegal tobacco at pocket money prices is becoming a growing problem across Powys.

A current affairs programme aired on Welsh TV channel S4C examined the trade in illegal tobacco, which is estimated to account for 15 per cent of all tobacco sold in Wales.

Cameras followed Trading Standards officials who carried out raids to take illegal tobacco off the streets.

In Powys a raid on a domestic dwelling saw £1,000 worth of tobacco seized, with people going to great lengths to hide the stock.

Dyfed-Powys Police Constable Elin Green was there to support Trading Standards on a raid said: "They don't fear the police, so they carry on. Trading Standards get involved and they do a great job processing it and taking it to court."

"If it happens here in Powys in a quiet place, it could happen anywhere so we hope we can get more information through doing things like this and we can get more warrants and get more things off the street."

A number of raids and investigations have taken place in Powys in recent years, and head of Trading Standards for Powys County Council, Clive Jones, said illegal tobacco has become a growing problem. He said: "Over the last five years, we've found increasing criminality involved in the sale of illegal tobacco, with organised crime gang involvement in the sale."

Arrests as armed police officers swoop

TWO men and two women were arrested in an armed police swoop by officers in Oswestry.

The suspects were tackled to the ground on Salop Road, near the B&M store, at about 6.30pm on Friday, April 6.

Officers armed with guns were stationed on the pavement next to the Penda Retail Park car park.

Witnesses to the incident said the suspects were seen being taken away from a Mercedes by the armed response team from North Wales.

West Mercia Police later released a statement confirming the arrests were in relation to a serious assault in Wrexham.

The statement said: "Residents in Oswestry may have seen firearms officers in Salop Road in the town."

"This was North Wales Police who were carrying out arrests in connection with a serious assault in the Wrexham area earlier this week."

"During the course of North Wales Police enquiries a vehicle travelled into the Oswestry area where it was subsequently stopped by North Wales Police."

"Two men and two women have been arrested in connection with the incident."

"It is not unusual for another force to come into the West Mercia Police area to carry out checks in relation to incidents in their own area and there are procedures in place to allow for cross border working between all forces."

Social worker search expanding

A LOCAL authority is extending a search for new social workers across the border into England.

Powys County Council currently has a shortage of social workers.

An open evening is set to take place for those interested in a career in social work on Wednesday next week at the Wynn-stay Hotel in Oswestry, from 4pm to 8pm.

The event is open to people who are already a social worker, or a senior practitioner, newly qualified or thinking about starting their career.

For more information, visit powys.gov.uk/jobs, e-mail vacancies@powys.gov.uk or call (01597) 826409.

Picture focus



Tim Hunter from Oswestry Classic Car Garage & Paint Shop, with a customer's TR5 1968



Steve Hazelwood's 1961 Vauxhall Cresta won best in show at the event



John Dawson from Tarporley and his 1969 Bedford CA

Car enthusiasts step back in time at historic castle

Report by Sue Austin

IT was a sight to make any car enthusiast's heart soar.

Dozens of classic and vintage and veteran cars made their way to Shropshire to take part in a special event in the shadow of a medieval castle.

Whittington Castle provided the perfect backdrop for the event, the sixth time it has been held in the village near Oswestry, and attracting vehicles from many eras.

The range of vehicles was wide and varied, from a 1930s convertible to a purple hearse.

But it was an immaculate 1961 Vauxhall Cresta that caught the eye of the judges and won the specially made trophy, built from car parts.

Owner, Steve Hazelwood, recently moved from Buckinghamshire to Oswestry.

"I bought the car in 1985," he said. "The body panels are all original and I had it painted its original colour."

Modern

"I drive a modern car most of the time but I absolutely love driving the Vauxhall Cresta," he said.

"It's easy to drive, relaxing and there are no annoying electronics."

The show's founder, Richard Banks, said: "The April Fools' Car Show is a free local show that features classic, vintage, veteran, and interesting vehicles of all sorts."

"It is always a very relaxed event and this weekend was no exception."

Owners appreciated the chance to get their vehicles out early in the year and provide a great day out for visitors.

The show was sponsored by Oswestry Classic Car Garage.

Tim Hunter, one of the owners, said: "We run our own show each July, in Ellesmere, in support of Macmillan."

"The April Fools' show provides another perfect opportunity for us to promote classic cars, and to support another worthy cause – a local landmark."

Although entrance to the show was free, castle manager, Sue Ellis said visitors were asked to make a donation towards the upkeep of the castle.

A 12th century Marches castle, Miss Ellis said it was believed to be the only castle in the UK that was cared for and looked after by a local community trust.

She said: "We have many, many events in the castle grounds throughout the year and



Tony Madden from Ellesmere under the bonnet of his 1968 Ford Anglia Saloon

this has become a firm favourite with local people and vehicle enthusiasts."

The event was like a walk through time.

Another Ford which brought back plenty of memories for the over 50s was the 1973 Ford Escort Mexico, complete with rally lights on the front.

Commercial vehicles on display included



Simon Darlington from Oswestry Classic Car Garage & Paint Shop, with his 1957 Morris Commercial at the event at Whittington Castle

Fast forward 30 years and visitors could see under the bonnet of a 1968 Ford Anglia owned by Tony Madden from Ellesmere.

Another Ford which brought back plenty of memories for the over 50s was the 1973 Ford Escort Mexico, complete with rally lights on the front.

Commercial vehicles on display included

a huge purple hearse complete with a purple coffin.

There was also trucks, including a 1957 Morris Commercial, taken to the show by Simon Darlington from the Oswestry Classic Car Garage and Paint Shop.

John Dawson drove his 1969 Bedford CA from Tarporley to exhibit at the show.

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14 Group gives details of its planned visits

Oswestry & Border Chronicle Thursday, April 19, 2018

OSWESTRY and Border History and Archaeology Group has announced details of its spring and summer visits.

The group begins its programme on May 11 with a visit to Pennant Melangell Church and Shrine. After a welcome from the Rev Christine Browne, priest guardian of the shrine church, John Hainsworth will conduct a guided tour.

People should meet at the church at 7pm.

On June 8 the group will visit Quinta Chapel and Sunday School. The guide, the Rev Digby James, will also speak about the mill owner and philanthropist Thomas Barnes who moved to the Quinta in 1858.

People should meet at the chapel at 7pm. The group's main outing this year will be an all-day visit on July 14.

A guided tour of the unique Kilpeck Church and its famous carvings in the morning will be followed by an optional lunch at the Kilpeck Inn. In the afternoon, the coach will go on to Hereford where there will be a guided tour of the cathedral and the new exhibition centre containing the chained library and the world-famous Mappa Mundi. Coach departs Oak Street Car Park at 8am, returning at 6.30pm.

To book a place, contact Dave Stirling on (01691) 688503; email: stirlings@waitrose.com

County will welcome more Syrian refugees

SHROPSHIRE will welcome a further 10 refugee families to the county, using the support in place for the 14 Syrian families that have already been settled.

Shropshire Council's cabinet decided to resettle the families during 2018/19 at a meeting last week.

The authority committed to the resettling of 15 Syrian families, made up of 63 individuals, in the county between June 2016 and March 2017.

Councillor Dean Carroll told the meeting that the families who have been taken on have settled "extremely well".

He said: "I hope we can agree to resettle 10 further families. We already have the infrastructure and experience in place now to cope with more families."

The current families have been resettled in four different locations throughout the county – five in Oswestry, five in Shrewsbury, three in Wem and two in Much Wenlock. One family from Wem opted to move to Birmingham as they had friends and family already settled in this area. This reduced individuals to 59. However there were two births in 2017 with a further two due in 2018 taking the total individuals back up to 63.

The emphasis is on immediate settlement into local communities with no "holding" accommodation. Many of the individuals are volunteering, and The Job Centre has told Shropshire Council that some are seeking work, but language "continues to be a barrier".

Carpet firm in stores shake-up

TELFORD'S Carpetright store is among the 92 to close as the chain announced it is set to axe 300 jobs.

But under the sweeping restructure, the stores in Shrewsbury, at Sundorne Retail Park, and Oswestry on Salop Road, are due to stay open.

The chain said that, overall, 92 sites had been earmarked for closure, although 11 have already stopped trading, with the rent on another 113 set to be slashed under the company voluntary arrangement (CVA) proposals being put to landlords.

It said it hopes to relocate staff where possible.

The Telford store, at Telford Bridge Retail Park, is not expected to close until September.

The group – which employs nearly 2,700 staff in total – also confirmed plans to raise around £60 million through a rights issue to put the company on a firmer financial footing.

The details came as it revealed a "technical breach" of its banking arrangements, but the group said it was taking action to address the breach.

Carer stole £20,000 from elderly victim to buy drugs and tickets to music festival

Report by Jordan Reynolds

A CARER used almost £21,000 stolen from an elderly woman to pay for a drug habit, holiday, and tickets to a festival.

Lauren Pearce pleaded guilty to fraud after using the 75-year-old victim's bank card at cashpoints to pay for the holiday to Ibiza and for tickets for her and friends to attend Creamfields Festival.

Shrewsbury Crown Court heard that the victim, from Oswestry, suffers from anxiety and depression and has not been able to leave her home for some time so relies on carers.

Judge Anthony Lowe was told that Pearce, 25, would be trusted to withdraw £250 in cash at a time from a cashpoint for the victim and that between December 2016 and September last year she stole just under £21,000 in goods

and cash. Laura Nash, prosecuting, said another one of the victim's carers noticed there were anomalies on the spending.

She said: "Concerns were raised and police were called who reviewed the bank transactions, noticed the fraudulent ones and reviewing CCTV for the cash points and saw a Vauxhall Corsa pull up and Miss Pearce get out and withdraw the cash."

In September last year Pearce was arrested and interviewed where she admitted the fraudulent transactions.

Miss Nash added that Pearce also had a cocaine habit which she needed to pay for.

Mitigating, Robert Edwards said Pearce's mother died five years ago and her actions spiralled out of control after a relationship with an abusive partner resulted in the culprit being convicted.

He said: "It's the beginning of a spiral which led to her being in crown court."

"She was suffering exceptionally low self esteem and turned to the use of cocaine."

"She tried to give herself some self esteem by living a lifestyle she could not afford."

"She has voluntarily got counselling to help her drug use and concedes that she was motivated by greed."

"She betrayed the victim's trust and that's something that is going to stay with her for the rest of her days."

Judge Anthony Lowe sentenced Pearce, of Bryn Road, Moss, Wrexham, to 12 months in prison, of which she will serve six.

He said: "I accept that you now realise what you did in your own words was selfish and there is no excuse for it and the likelihood of you coming before a criminal court again is remote."

"But what you did was a blatant breach of trust."

"Not only did you betray the victim's trust but the whole care worker industry, because it's offences like these that create a lack of trust in people that are cared for and the families who have elderly relatives who are being cared for."

"There has to be a message going out that anybody who is tempted to take money from elderly people will go to prison."

Report by Jonny Drury

OSWESTRY'S mayor has welcomed plans for a new supermarket in the town which will create 60 jobs.

Morrisons, which has a £4 million lease on the Smithfield site on Shrewsbury Road, has issued new plans to develop the land and build a store.

The move comes three years after a £45 million plan for a leisure complex fell through.

New proposals include a 25,000 square foot supermarket, with a garden centre incorporated into it inside a glazed store entrance, a petrol station, a barista cafe, electric charging points, a hand car wash in the customer car park, and a 310-space car park.

The site will be accessed off a new roundabout on Shrewsbury Road and the development will create 60 new full and part time jobs.

If the application is successful around 100 staff would also move from the supermarket's Station Road store in the town to the new site.

Leaflets regarding the new plans have been issued to Oswestry town councillors and will go out to around 2,000 residents.

Feedback

Supermarket bosses are asking for feedback from local residents before they submit an official planning application to Shropshire Council.

Councillor Vince Hunt, town mayor, said he is pleased plans have finally been announced, and the news is one of a number of good things going on in the town.

He said: "The plans have been a long time coming and it is pleasing they now have plans to develop something on the site that is similar to the previous plans."

"The site has looked awful for a long time and something really needed to be done. One thing I would say is that I'm disappointed that the council haven't been kept fully informed about the project. There is only going to be positives coming out of this, it comes after the 600 homes were given the green light, and it will create jobs in the town and will be used by people who will live in those 600 homes."

Oswestry Chamber of Commerce chairman Mark Derham believes the long awaited news can only be a good thing, and hopes that local developers will see the benefit of development.

He added: "I think it can only be a good thing for the town, it is very welcome and everybody has an opinion on it. Something was always going to happen but the news that something is finally going to happen is great."

New feathered friends for care home residents



Chirk Court resident Rita Evans, aged 106, makes friends with Spike the barn owl at a recent Easter event. Spike is from the Stockley Birds of Prey Centre. Also pictured is resident Nan Roberts.

IT was a case of Easter owls as well as chicks as residents of the Chirk Court Care Home near Oswestry celebrated the holiday.

Special events at the care home included line dancing and a visit by the Stockley Birds of Prey Centre.

"We were delighted that the Ellesmere Line-dancers kindly volunteered to provide some entertainment for our residents."

"They dressed in Easter outfits and bonnets

and bought along baskets of chocolate eggs for the residents too."

"It was a lovely event," Mandi Southern, activities co-ordinator at the care home said.

"The residents had a brilliant time and the room was filled with laughter and smiles as many joined in with the singing and dancing."

Mandi from the home, which is managed by Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, part of the Pennaf Housing Group, said it wasn't the only

visit to Chirk Court over Easter. She said: "It was a case of Easter owls as well as Easter chicks this year. It was a real privilege to welcome Pam Graham from the Stockley Birds of Prey Centre. Residents were thrilled to be able to hold the owls that Pam brought along and to find out more about them."

"It was a new experience for many of our residents who were absolutely delighted to meet these wonderful birds."

Health service 'is addressing staffing concerns'

A MENTAL health service for young people in Shropshire is addressing its staffing issues, health commissioners have confirmed.

About 50 protesters recently campaigned outside the base of Shropshire's children and adolescent mental health service in Shrewsbury.

It followed claims the service had too few psychiatrists to cover all of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin boroughs.

South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust runs the emo-

tional health and wellbeing service, which has already had to address a number of teething problems since last May.

Dr Julie Davies, director of performance and delivery at Shropshire clinical commissioning group, said three locum consultants had also recently resigned.

She said priority cases had been identified and handed over to the remaining psychiatrists.

It has led to the cancellation of 84 routine appointments, although urgent appointment slots

are still available. However, Dr Davies said staffing numbers are expected to be boosted later this month.

She said: "They have been able to obtain three locums who are starting at various dates in April."

A report to the CCG governance board says: "Psychiatrists with specialist skills in treating young people are very difficult to recruit, this is a national issue."

"However, these posts are required and to cover the gap, locums are used when necessary."

"There is however, four psychiatrists working full time within the service and a lead psychiatrist who is working alongside them."

"In addition a further substantive consultant is commencing in post on May 7 and interviews are taking place for a further substantive post in April."

Dr Julian Povey, chairman of Shropshire CCG, said there were problems but the service is improving.

He said: "It is in a better place than it was and it's moving forward."

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EMERGENCY
24
HOUR
RESPONSE

Document marks its 700th year

A DOCUMENT that recorded a land transfer between two parties is celebrating being the oldest document in Powys County Council's archives.

Written on April 21, 1318, the title deed, which is written in Latin and made in parchment, recorded a transfer of land between two parties in the Old Radnor area of Powys.

It is currently located in the new archives building in Llandrindod Wells and is celebrating its 700th birthday. Councillor Phyl Davies, portfolio holder for assets, said: "This type of document is extremely rare for Mid Wales and provides a fascinating glimpse into families and properties which existed in the county 700 years ago. Researching local history can be a great social pastime and using sources such as title deeds to search the history of your house may help you uncover some intriguing stories."

The 700-year-old piece is just one of a number of deeds held by the Powys archives which has information and stories on houses dating back hundreds of years.

All archived material in the county is now held at the base in Llandrindod Wells which opened in October at a cost of £1.6 million. The investment from the council saw it turn industrial estate units into a long term home for the documents after the archives service had previously operated out of a small building near County Hall.

For more information go to powys.gov.uk/en/archives/find-archives-local-records.

Footbridge is now listed as a public highway

A TIMBER footbridge that spans a river has been listed as a public highway and is now the responsibility of the local authority's highways department.

The Llanfair Caereinion footbridge was built by the old Montgomeryshire District Council to link footways to Banwy Industrial Estate and Glangrafon across the Afon Banwy.

When the district council joined with Powys County Council, responsibility for the bridge fell to the property and regeneration service, with some repair work being carried out in the last 20 years.

However, a condition assessment of the bridge and both paths has not been undertaken and it is likely significant work is now needed.

Information in a report that went before the council's cabinet states that under the Highways Act 1980 after 20 years of public use the bridge would be presumed as a highway for pedestrians.

At the cabinet meeting councillors agreed the bridge will now come under the responsibility of the highways department to allow the council to put a financial bid forward next year to carry out any repair works that are needed.

Disability award for tourist centre

SHROPSHIRE Disability Network has given a certificate of appreciation to the British Ironwork Centre.

The disability charity toured the tourist attraction near Oswestry in February to carry out a check and evaluation of the premises.

It was so impressed its chairman, Ruby Hartshorn, returned to present the centre with a certificate of appreciation.

Emma Parry from the centre said the attraction was visited by hundreds of people using wheelchairs, crutches, sticks and other aids.

She said: "We have made great efforts to embrace visitors that have difficulties with mobility. We try so hard to accommodate all abilities, it's really uplifting to have been given this certificate."

The centre has agreed for quarterly checks and to implement any actions needed from each inspection.

Picture focus



The volunteers work through all sorts of weather to get the job done



It's back-breaking work sometimes when you are restoring a canal



The volunteers work together to carry out the canal restoration

Muddy marvellous team work to restore waterway

Report by Sue Austin

A GROUP of dedicated volunteers have been spending wet and muddy weekends helping to bring an historic waterway back to life.

Members of the Shropshire Union Canal Society are restoring a section of the Montgomery Canal near Oswestry, with monthly working parties in every weather.

March saw snow and sub-zero temperatures while April downpours and endless mud hampered the work.

Despite the conditions more than two dozen men and women from across the UK worked tirelessly to install a French drain and construct a clay dam, west of the a newly-restored section.

Fred Barrett, one of the volunteers, said: "The mud really was tough but everyone got stuck in and we made good progress."

Section

As well as the engineering work the volunteers re-sited the great crested newt fences along the newly-restored section to allow the tow path to be resurfaced to the correct width.

The new fencing ensures none of the amphibians – a protected species – can make their way into the canal.

A local man who gives up his time to join the working parties is Richard Maund, 50, who lives in nearby Maesbury Marsh.

"I really want to see this canal open again and being used for what it should be used for," he said.

"It is also a great social group. "Those who don't live nearby stay in local pubs and we get together and enjoy the evenings as well as working together during the day."

Many travel from much further afield. Graham Harris, 50, travels each month from south London.

Holiday

He said: "We used to holiday here when I was a child, in a B&B at Maesbury."

"We could see the canal across the fields. "Then, 35 years later we had a family reunion, visited the farm where we stayed and I saw boats on what had basically been a ditch as I remembered it."

"I did some investigation and found that the Shropshire Union Canal Society held working parties."

"Now I come every month."



Glyn Whitehurst carefully drives a digger as the work on the waterway progresses



Fred Barrett is all smiles as he surveys the impressive work carried out so far to restore a section of the Montgomery Canal near Oswestry

Volunteering for more than quarter of a century have been Ruth and John Blundred, who travel from Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Ruth said: "We moored our canal boat at Whixall and heard about the restoration of the Montgomery Canal."

"John volunteered for a few times and then our daughter, Susan, and then son, Michael, joined the working parties for their Duke of Edinburgh silver and gold awards and we ended up volunteering as a family."

Mr Barrett said the society would welcome

more volunteers of all ages who could spend one day a month or a weekend a month helping to restore the canal.

Anyone interested in volunteering or who would like more details about the project can contact him by calling (01902) 398441.



Jane Millington, owner and head practitioner at Body and Face Options clinic in Maesbury Marsh tells us all about one of the amazing new machines that is now available at her clinic.

Ultimate

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This non-surgical lifting programme has become one of the most sought after treatments and HIFU is the latest nonsurgical technology to excel in this area in just one single session!

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18£18m schools plan revealed by authority

Oswestry & Border Chronicle Thursday, April 19, 2018

A LOCAL authority could invest £18 million in its school buildings and facilities in the next five years.

Powys County Council's schools service major improvement programme, which is running from 2018 to 2023, has earmarked spending of just over £18 million over five years, to improve facilities and carry out repairs at schools around the county.

A report by portfolio holder education Myfanwy Alexander set out plans for the coming year, with a total of £2.45 million set to be spent around the county in 2018/19.

Councillor Alexander said the council will invest in schools and facilities where unnecessary.

She said: "When new schools are built in the county, other schools feel like they have been left out, but with this programme that is not the case.

"This is an improvement programme to ensure schools are not forgot about, and it shows that we are not just firefighting but we are making improvements.

"A number of schools are in line for improvements within the programme."

The following year over £5 million of spending is earmarked for schools across the county, but before that can be confirmed it would also have to go past the cabinet and full council.

Festival will have plenty of beer and music

A MID Wales town is set to host its first beer and music festival this weekend.

The festival will take place in Montgomery on Saturday with beers on offer from both sides of the border, including the town's very own award-winning Monty's Brewery.

There will be an array of cider and perry drinks on offer, as well as traditional real ales. Starting at 2.30pm, the festival will take place at four venues across the town, including the brewery's visitor centre. Other venues include The Dragon Hotel, The Crown Inn and Montgomery Town Hall. The musical part of the festival will begin at 3pm, and kicks off with Darryl McKenzie performing in the Monty's Visitor Centre and he is followed by Ricky Smith at 5pm at the Dragon Hotel then Steve Edwards at 7pm at the Crown Inn.

To round off the day, Shrewsbury band All Fired Up will play their energetic mix of pop, soul and rock 'n roll at 9pm at the town hall. Tickets for the evening gig are £5 on the door, and all other musical events throughout the festival are free.

Local food will be available throughout the day in the town's fish and chip bar, Monty's Brewery will have hot dogs and Taste Montgomery producer, Morwen's Meats, will be selling farm-produced lamb and beef burgers at the town hall.

Event organiser Russ Honeyman, of Monty's Brewery, said: "It should be a great day out for real ale and music enthusiasts."

Police 'are using abuser hunters'

NEW figures show police forces across Wales used evidence from paedophile hunters in almost two thirds of child sexual grooming cases over a three-year period.

Between 2015 and 2017, police forces started proceedings in 31 cases against grooming suspects in Wales – 19 of those cases saw police use evidence gathered by the civilian groups.

In that period, Dyfed-Powys Police recorded 82 cases of sexual grooming, with proceedings taken forward against just one person, however no evidence gathered by vigilantes was used in the cases.

North Wales Police did not use vigilante information in the cases, however Gwent Police were in charge of 11 cases that involved evidence from the groups, while South Wales Police used their evidence eight times.

The groups use 'decoys' online to post as underage children and wait to be contacted by adults.

They then talk privately with adults and identify those trying to groom youngsters, before tracking them down and confronting them.

Developers assure objectors their log cabin proposals will not harm woodland

Report by Jonny Drury

made, and is being investigated under the council's complaints policy.

It has been called in by the local member, and will be discussed at a planning meeting later this year.

The developers have invited locals to come and talk to them about the plans and insisted they have no desire to spoil the area they live just 200 metres away from.

Prior to purchasing the 10-acre site, they undertook a feasibility study, and employed an ecologist and arborologist to assess the woodland.

Miss Perkins said: "To concerned locals Pete

and I would say, if you have concerns, please come and talk to us.

"We love the stunningly beautiful valley we have moved to, as well as its peace and tranquillity.

"This is exactly why we think people would love to stay here on holiday, we have no desire to spoil it

"Despite some claims, we have no plans to fell trees to make room for cabins.

"We have employed arborologists and ecologists to ensure the woodland is managed to enhance its habitat for wildlife and biodiversity."

Miss Perkins and Mr Barkley, who have previously studied for masters degrees in environmental architecture at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth, moved

to the area two years ago. The couple have pledged to use local tradesmen and businesses, and have already identified local construction companies. They will employ a cleaner and gardener and plan to source produce from local independent food companies.

They are also planning to encourage public transport use through reward based financial discounts.

Objectors are concerned more than two cabins will be built in the area, and trees will be felled. However, the couple have insisted more units would defeat the object of their selling point, to create two peaceful cabins for breaks for people to holiday in.

They said: "Contrary to the claims that are made we have no plans for any further units."

Talks to be held on ways to make town more green

Report by Sue Austin

OSWESTRY could have a greener future if councillors push ahead with ideas including putting solar panels on public buildings.

The town could set up its own Community Energy Scheme but first the town council wants to gauge local support for the idea.

A public meeting will be held this evening (Thursday) for residents and also organisations who may want to get involved.

The meeting will be held from 6.30pm to 8pm in the Parish Centre, St Oswald's Church.

Oswestry Mayor Vince Hunt said Oswestry Town Council was investigating the feasibility of establishing a Community Energy Scheme.

"We have organised a public open meeting to better understand the level of public support for such an initiative," he said.

"This project is in its very early stages and the meeting has been organised so that we can hear the views of local people and also from individuals and organisations who may wish to be involved in such a scheme.

Decide

"This will help us to decide whether or not to apply for funding so that an in-depth feasibility study can be commissioned".

During the meeting there will be a presentation by Sharenergy, a Shrewsbury-based organisation that helps communities to set up and own renewable energy societies.

Oswestry Town Council will also put forward its vision for the project.

Elsewhere in the country, Community Energy Schemes have funded the installation of Solar PV panels onto public and community buildings to generate electricity for the buildings' occupants at a lower cost than they currently pay.

Those in favour of such schemes say this also has the added benefit of reducing CO2 emissions.

There is also the potential for commercial firms to get involved.

Councillor Hunt said: "If you would like to find out more then please come along, there will be an opportunity for questions and for a discussion on the interest in and merit of such schemes in Oswestry."

As well as looking at solar panels on public buildings, the council has also discussed putting electric charging points on one of its car parks.

'Kind and selfless' Megan is a health hero



Megan Pinches receiving the Health Hero Award from Mark Brandreth with, from left, colleagues Caroline Thomas and Georgie Chetwood

A PHYSIOTHERAPIST who has been described as "kind and selfless" has won the latest Health Hero Award at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Megan Pinches, specialist trauma and orthopaedics physiotherapist, has won the monthly award at the hospital after receiving five nominations from her colleagues.

Her nominations came from therapy support workers Joanna Lewis and Viv MacDonald and physiotherapists Larna Andrew, Ruth Corbett and Georgie Chetwood, who all described her as someone who is always willing to go above

and beyond for patients and staff alike. Citations included Viv's, which stated: "Megan is kind-hearted and hard working. She is very supportive of colleagues and will always help if she can." Ruth added: "She's a brilliant physio who will do the absolute best for her patients, not to mention the most helpful, loveliest person." And Larna said: "She is an excellent physio with outstanding knowledge and also such a lovely person with patients and colleagues." Megan was presented with the award in front of colleagues, who arranged a team meeting so that she would have no idea it

was happening. She said: "This was a complete surprise; I wasn't expecting it at all. It means so much to me that my colleagues took the time to nominate me and said such nice things about me. I'm very touched and I'll display the certificate at home with pride."

The award was presented to Megan by chief executive Mark Brandreth. Mark said: "Megan is clearly a highly valued member of staff and her dedication to her patients is an inspiration to all. She is the perfect example of a staff member who lives the trust values in everything she does."

Community appeals for action over farm building

A RURAL community is appealing to planners to take action over a building that has gone up on a farm.

Residents and community councillors in Penrhos, Deuddwr and Sarnau say the construction at Penrhos Farm is more like an industrial than agricultural building.

They have written to Powys Council Council and met with their MP and Welsh Assembly member over traffic and safety concerns.

Powys County Council has said it is unable to comment as there is an open enforcement case

file which is being actively investigated. In a letter to the council's planning portfolio holder, community councillors have raised their concerns.

"The planning governance process which is so carefully designed to ensure that residents can understand and respond to proposed developments which may affect them, their families or their businesses has broken down. It has failed to the extent that a large-scale unauthorised new industrial building has been erected over a five month period without any consent

for such a building being granted," the letter says.

Stella Townsend, the chair of Llandrinio and Arddleen Community Council, said concerned residents had attended a recent meeting to discuss the building which is said to be almost 3,000 metres square.

She said that the clerk to the community council alerted a planning officer in October about a large amount of stone and steel being transported to Penrhos Farm following telephone calls and emails from concerned resi-

dents. She said: "The siting of this facility in this rural environment is totally unacceptable on environmental, heritage, health and safety, transport and highway grounds.

"Because no applications have been received we cannot formally raise concerns through the normal governance process."

The letter set out several concerns including the visual impact of the building in a rural location and the impact of the development on the tranquil environment of the listed Penrhos Church and Rectory.

Nurses invited to recruitment day to meet teams

NURSES interested in a career at Shropshire's specialist orthopaedic hospital are being encouraged to attend a recruitment day.

The event will be held on Sunday, taking place between 9.30am and 1pm at the Gobowen-based hospital.

The main entrance of the hospital will be transformed into a hub for visiting nurses to meet and chat with the teams.

The day will provide the opportunity for potential staff members to take a tour of the hospital, undertake assessments and even be

interviewed on the day – if people have registered their interest before the event. If successful, they could leave the hospital with offers of employment.

Experienced, newly-qualified and student nurses who are qualifying this year are invited to attend. It follows a similar event last November when 21 nurses went home with the offer of a new job.

Bev Tabernacle, director of nursing, is hoping to see a good turn-out of nurses. She said: "RJAH is a truly wonderful place to be a nurse

and we want to demonstrate that as part of our upcoming recruitment day.

"We want nurses who show compassion and exhibit the behaviours which will enable them to deliver excellent care to our patients.

"We advertise roles in the usual way on our NHS jobs page all the time, but we wanted to meet as many nurses as possible throughout the day, and hopefully provide them with an offer of employment following assessment on the day through this 'one-stop shop' style of event.

"This is the perfect way to invite people in and give them a taste of what's on offer. We want to show nurses how great it is to work here."

Sue Pryce, from human resources, said: "We've held a number of recruitment events and have found them to be a fantastic way of showcasing what we do for staff in terms of careers and opportunities."

People can express their interest by contacting the HR team on (01691) 404390 or by emailing human.resources@rjah.nhs.uk

Sandra steps up for charity



Sandra Trevor is running this year's London Marathon for charity

WHEN she lines up at the start of the London Marathon Sandra Trevor will have a very personal reason to be raising money for her chosen charity.

In 2003 Sandra was diagnosed with breast cancer, alone and hundreds of miles away from her home town in Shropshire.

The support she had from Breast Cancer Care, her family and friends, helped her through her treatment and beyond.

Now she wants her marathon to raise funds so others receive the same support.

The 51-year-old runner from Oswestry was living and working in Ipswich when she was diagnosed.

She said: "I went to the hospital by myself and was given the news. It turned my life upside down. The next day I packed as many belongings as I could into my car and drove back to Oswestry to be with my mum.

"It was a terrifying time but with the help of family and friends and Breast Cancer Care I came through two years of treatment."

Sandra's cancer had spread to her lymph nodes as she was diagnosed as HER2 positive.

She had surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and then had the new-to-Shropshire drug Herceptin.

She said: "Breast Cancer Care was there for me, not only through my treatment, for years later if I ever needed to talk to someone or wanted advice. And I know they still

would be today. Doing the London Marathon gives me a chance to give something back and help fund support for others."

Sandra said her training had seen her run in all weathers, including snow.

She said: "I have had incredible support from the clerk to Oswestry Town Council, David Preston, who has passed on his expertise after completing several London Marathons himself.

"I could not have done the training without his help and advice."

Anyone who would like to support Sandra's fundraising can do so through justgiving.com/fundraising/sandra-trevor or by cheque payable to Breast Cancer Care into the Guildhall in Oswestry.

Meanwhile an Oswestry man is hoping to raise £2,250 for a national charity by taking part in the London Marathon.

Jody Wilson will be running for Leukaemia Care, a national blood cancer charity. It'll be the sixth London Marathon for Jody. For the past three years, Jody has ran for Leukaemia Care and in the process has raised over £10,000.

The 37-year-old grounds manager is running the London Marathon because in 2014, his sister was diagnosed with leukaemia.

Visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFfundraiserPage?userUrl=JodyWilson1&pageUrl=4 to donate to Jody's donation page.

Hull bids for iconic Knife Angel statue

AN iconic monument built by an Oswestry firm could be on the move to Hull after a campaign was launched to tackle knife crime in the city.

A group involving Humberside Police and spearheaded by Kayleigh Pepper, who lost her brother Richard who was stabbed to death, has launched the #NoMoreKnives campaign, in a bid to tackle and educate youngsters on the dangers of knife crime in Hull.

As part of the campaign, Kayleigh, along with PC Christian Sewell and PCSO Richard Whelan visited the British Ironwork Centre at Aston near Oswestry for discussions potentially taking the Knife Angel, created by sculptor Alfie Bradley, to the Hull.

Hull is one of a number of cities to show interest in the angel after a bid to have it placed on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square was rejected by the mayor of London.

The plan is to transport the angel to Hull, which is currently the UK city of culture, and place it in the city centre for families who have suffered the effects of knife crime to visit and leave memorials and pictures.

The group will now go back to Hull and discuss with the City of Culture committee about putting a formal bid through to take the angel to the north.

Kayleigh said: "We have just launched the campaign, and feel it would be good to have the Knife Angel in the city to highlight knife crime, and to educate people on the effects knife crime has.

"We have spoken with Clive Knowles at the centre, and as long as we can provide security and transport the Knife Angel, then we could take it

Report by Jonny Drury

to Hull. Currently Hull is the city of culture until 2021, and there are still resources available to use to help us with taking the Knife Angel to Hull and we are confident we can do that.

"We want to put it somewhere in the city where people who have suffered from knife crime can go and pay respects, and add to it by leaving photos or anything in memory of their loved ones."

Kayleigh launched the campaign after her brother was stabbed to death following a confrontation outside his home with Daniel Flatley on June 22, 2015, at the age of just 25.

Flatley was jailed for 11 years for manslaughter and following her brother's death, Kayleigh struggled with her life.

She said: "It hit me in a big way, I suffered with anxiety, and you feel a bit isolated, and I think it was my children who really kept me going.

"It was only about a year ago where I started to really piece things back together."

It was then when the idea for a campaign to tackle knife crime began. As part of the campaign she is hoping to get every single secondary school in Hull to pledge to sign up to the new police initiative which will see her, PCSO Whelan and PC Sewell, visit pupils to talk about the real impact knife crime can have. Kayleigh added: "When you look at it, other areas have bigger problems with knife crime, but there is a problem with gang culture and in the last six months there has been 430 incidents and three fatalities. With the Knife Angel being rejected by the mayor on London, we hope by having it in Hull we can show police forces that it can be done and it can have an impact."

Fodder bank to help farm animals hit by bad weather

WATERLOGGED fields and the cold, wet weather have left farmers in Shropshire and Mid Wales worried they could run out of food for their animals.

The National Farmers' Union and NFU Cymru have launched their online Fodder Bank to help members find animal feed for their farms, or sell any surplus to assist others.

An online food bank for livestock, it means farmers can find reasonably priced feed for their

cattle and sheep. The NFU is also working with Forage Aid, the charity that supports farmers whose livestock has been affected by an extreme weather event by providing forage and/or bedding to those in need.

It sources forage and bedding from donations and pledges from within the farming community, then distributes it to those whose own supply of feed has been destroyed or made inaccessible due to the weather.

NFU Cymru president John Davies said: "I am hearing from farmers who say that the sustained wet weather has meant very few have been able to turn out their livestock and this has led to increasing difficulty sourcing available forage.

"The wet weather and late spring have seen livestock and dairy producers not able to put their stock out on the fields because of a lack of grass growth and available forage."

New garden at 19 hospital gets the go-ahead

Oswestry & Border Chronicle Thursday, April 19, 2018

A HOSPITAL garden where patients will be able to have their beds and life-saving equipment plugged into special power points has been given the go-ahead.

Horatio's Garden is to be built at the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

The centre has teamed up with landscape architect Bunny Guinness who has designed the garden. It will be one of a number of Horatio's Gardens that are being created in spinal units across the country. It will include a special pavilion where patients and their families can enjoy time away from the ward.

Shropshire Council has granted planning permission for the garden which is being created thanks to a fundraising appeal. Anyone wishing to donate can do so through horatiogarden.org.uk.

Bunny Guinness said: "Horatio's Gardens really are a breath of fresh air as they provide all the benefits of a garden to people who really appreciate them.

"For the patients, it may well be their first venture into the outside world again. For their friends, families and staff, the gardens provide a softer, more personable space away from the ward. I am privileged to be involved in this exciting project." The garden and maintenance will cost £700,000.

Canal group organises St George's walk

A ST George's Day Walk organised by the Friends of the Montgomery Canal will take place on Sunday.

Walkers should arrive at Canal Central, Maesbury Marsh at 9.45am for a 10am start.

Freda Davies from the friends group said: "Starting at Canal Central, we head south west along the Montgomery Canal towards Morton, passing Gronwen Wharf, Bridge 82.

"Continue under Redwith Bridge to Pryce's Bridge where the current restoration work is being carried out, onto Crickheath Wharf, through to Schoolhouse Bridge, Bridge 86.

"We then leave the canal, on the Llwyn-tidmod road, crossing the B4396, staying on the lane and reaching Maesbury, then dropping back to Canal Central.

"There are two small stiles to climb. If this proves too challenging, there is a slightly longer route around them, between Bridges 85 to 86, through Crickheath.

"The towpath is likely to be very muddy between Bridges 84 to 86, so footwear with good grips is essential, and possibly walking poles will be required, if weather has been wet prior to walk."

For further details contact (01938) 590039.

Diabetes will be in spotlight

WORKSHOPS for people with or worried about diabetes, and their families, will be held in a village near Oswestry next month.

The awareness programme, hosted by the Shropshire Rural Communities Charity will be held at the St Martins Centre, St Martins.

The sessions will be held on May 3 and 10.

The two afternoon sessions are free of charge to people with diabetes, their families and anyone who is concerned about developing the condition.

Places must be booked in advance by phoning the charity on 01743 360641 or emailing enquiries@shropshire-ccc.org.uk. Susie Hancock from the charity said: "Diabetes is becoming increasingly common but it is estimated that 80 per cent of Type 2 Diabetes cases are avoidable.

"Simple lifestyle changes have been shown to help delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, including achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight; being physically active; eating a healthy diet and avoiding tobacco.

"Once diabetes has developed, there are more lifestyle adaptations which can help to manage the potentially serious complications."

Councils' top officers' salaries are revealed

COUNCIL top brass in Shropshire and Mid Wales received more than £2.5 million in pay and other benefits in the last 12 months, new figures reveal.

The Taxpayers' Alliance's annual "Council Rich List" revealed the pay and benefits of all local council employees who were paid more than £100,000 during the 2016/17 financial year.

Powys County Council proved to be the biggest payer in the region, with its eight highest-paid executives receiving more than £1.17 million. But much of this was due to severance payments.

The highest salary in the region went to Jeremy Patterson, chief executive of Powys County Council, whose overall wage

was £189,000. Theresa May is paid a 'basic' salary of £150,405.

Richard Partington, managing director of Telford & Wrekin Council, was the second highest earner, with a basic salary of £138,370, rising to £155,160 when pension contributions are taken into account. Shropshire Council's chief executive Clive Wright came third in the area, with a basic salary of £124,976, a pension contribution of £17,209, and other payments of £2,500. His total package amounted to £144, 685.

Overall, Telford & Wrekin had four officers picking up more than £100,000 a year, at a cost of £508,836.

Seven of Shropshire Council's officers received six-figure sums, costing the taxpayer £823,426.

The authority's director of public health received £115,930. Director of adult services picked up £113,419 and director of children's services and head of legal and democratic services received the same package. Shropshire's head of finance, governance and assurance, received £110,567.

Apart from Mr Partington, Telford & Wrekin's other main earners were director of customer and neighbourhood wellbeing, and the director of children's and adult services, who each received £110,696 basic and £13,948 pension contributions. The interim assistant director of early help and support received a basic salary of £31,657, but a £72,731 payment as compensation for loss of office, taking the total amount received to £104,388.

20 Objections to poultry plans are submitted

Oswestry & Border Chronicle Thursday, April 19, 2018

PLANS to extend a chicken farm have brought concerns from parish councillors and a rural organisation.

Great Ness Poultry Ltd has applied for planning permission to build four new poultry sheds and nine feed bins at its farm at Kinton just off the A5.

Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council has objected saying that taking account of the number of other sheds in the area, the council has concerns over the cumulative impact of amenity, noise and odour and vehicle movements.

It is also concerned about how the development would affect new housing such as that being constructed on The Crescent in Nesscliffe.

An objection has also been received by Shropshire Council from the Shrewsbury branch of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England.

David Arkinstall for the CPRE said there would be an adverse impact on the landscape.

He said the existing unit had been located and screened to minimise so far as possible its impact on the surrounding area. He added: "Nevertheless, it is a dominant feature in an important landscape."

Shropshire Council's north planning committee will debate the application at a later date.

Branch of pro-Europe group set up

A NEW branch of a pro-European party has been launched serving Oswestry and North Shropshire.

The European Movement, Oswestry and North Shropshire was set up last week, revitalising an organisation that first began in 1948 after the Second World War.

Its spokeswoman, Jayne Middleton, said: "A group of pro-Europeans got together on April 10 to form a new branch of the European Movement for Oswestry and North Shropshire.

"The European Movement UK is a grass-roots, independent, pro-European organisation working to give a voice to those who believe that Britain's future lies side by side with our European partners.

"Founded in October 1948 after World War II, this independent, cross-party, non-governmental Movement is centred upon fostering peace and cooperation with our European neighbours and partners."

Founding member of the branch, Steve Boyd, quoted Winston Churchill, one of the prime movers and an honorary president of the European Movement.

He said: "Churchill said in 1946 'it is to recreate the European family, or as much of it as we can, and provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom'.

"Out of this desire for peace came the institution which became today's European Union".

For more details contact info@euro-move.org.uk.

Dismissal case won by worker

A MEMBER of staff at a college for students with learning difficulties and disabilities has won a claim she was unfairly dismissed.

A two-day tribunal took place in Birmingham in February after a case was lodged by Mrs L Gaunt against the Derwen College in Gobowen.

The judgement of the tribunal was published recently.

The judgement from the tribunal stated that Employment Judge Dimbylow found that Mrs Gaunt had been unfairly dismissed.

In the judgement, Judge Dimbylow found that the claimant's claim for unfair dismissal was well founded and succeeded.

The judge also found that a claim for damages for breach of contract, over the respondent's failure to give notice or make a payment in lieu of notice is well-founded, and succeeds, and ordered the college to pay damages.

A remedy hearing to decide how much compensation will be paid will take place on May 30 in Birmingham, it has been announced.

21st birthday fundraiser for Hope House will help memory of brave Daniel to live on

DANIEL McHugh was given no hope of survival when he was born.

The youngster from Llanerch Emrys, near Penybont, Mid Wales, was born with a condition called Pesudo Trisonomy, a chromosomal abnormality which baffled doctors at hospital's in Shrewsbury and Birmingham.

However Daniel, who was born with six digits on his hands and feet, a hole in his heart, a nose defect and a hair lip, defied the odds to survive and enjoy a childhood as much as he could, until he died on New Years Eve, 2007, at the age of 10.

Over 10 years on, and ahead of what would have been his 21st birthday on Monday, Daniel's mother Lesley has launched a campaign to raise money for Hope House Children's Hos-

Report by Jonny Drury

pice, as her son's memory lives on. The family were given respite care at the hospice in Morda, near Oswestry, and counsellors there have continued to help and support the family until this day.

Lesley said: "We're raising this money because I really do not know how myself and Aaron would have got through losing him without their help and support.

"The support we had before and after was fantastic, their support is vital for families, it isn't just the support to a sick child, it is the support given to the family, the way they supported me and Aaron was amazing."

Lesley set up a trust fund and raised thousands of pounds to help Daniel enjoy various trips, including one special trip to see Santa in Lapland.

However over Christmas 2007, his condition began to deteriorate.

On Christmas Eve, he suffered problems and was taken to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and then on to Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool.

He had suffered bad brain damage and couldn't breath on his own, and on New Year's Eve he passed away.

Lesley said: "It is was an horrendous experience, and the Christmas period is still always hard, we didn't really do anything until recently.

"He was taken to Alder Hey from Shrewsbury, and then he was getting worse.

"It was a horrible time, however Hope House were fantastic, they came with us to the hospital, and took his brother Aaron out to the cinema and other places.

"The support they gave was amazing."

She aims to raise £500 ahead of Daniel's 21st birthday for the hospice, and has appealed for donations towards the cause. Lesley added: "He reached milestones throughout his short life that doctors said he would never reach, and this is another thing that will help his memory live on.

"Please donate anything you can afford in memory of our Daniel." To donate to go just-giving.com/fundraising/lesley-mchugh1

Report by Jonny Drury

A GROUP fighting to save a rural school near Oswestry has called for a closure notice to be rescinded after a row erupted over consultation.

The Ceiriog Valley Federation of Schools consultation has been looking at the future of Ysgol Pontfadog, Llanarmon Primary School and Cynddelw at Glyn Ceiriog.

A Wrexham Council executive board meeting proposed to issue a statutory notice of closure to Ysgol Pontfadog following a recommendation in the consultation.

The decision was met with anger by parents who insisted they would fight the closure of the school which currently has 18 pupils.

Now Glyntraian Community Council is calling for the closure notice to be rescinded after an officer admitted making a mistake with regards to the council's consultation document.

Submission

In the board meeting, the officer said the council's submission for the consultation came after the deadline and that they had refused to participate.

However, the council argued its submission, which rejected the consultation document and did not wish to endorse any of the three options, was within the deadline.

Wrexham Council has admitted the officer made a mistake and has apologised. A spokesman said: "Unfortunately it was mistakenly stated at the executive board meeting that the response was late. This was an error on the part of the officer in the meeting for which the council apologises unreservedly." The council stated in accordance with the decision there is a 28-day period to lodge an appeal. However, the community council have hit out calling for the closure notice to be rescinded and the decision to be revisited. The council also said it was lodging a complaint with the Public Ombudsman for Wales. A statement from the council says: "We look to Wrexham Council to rescind the executive board's decision to publish the statutory notice for closure with immediate effect.

"We seek a written commitment from the council's leadership to revisit all the points raised by the elected member for the Ceiriog Valley, Councillor Trevor Bates, to the executive board regarding procedural impropriety, with the requisite rigour that was so patently lacking throughout this process and as evidenced by this admission."

Joy as missing dog is found – six years on!



Paula Bennett with Bizkit's collar and harness, as she waits excitedly for her absent pet's homecoming

WHEN Bizkit the Parson Jack Russell went missing in Toulouse, France, his owners thought he had gone forever.

But nearly six years later he is set to be reunited with his family thanks to his microchip and some very helpful volunteers.

Paula Bennett, 48, believes Bizkit was probably taken on the last day of a trip to visit her sister in the region in May 2012. "I was distraught," she said. "We just got up and he was gone. We don't think he would have run away, and he was all caged in. They've said to me now that they think he was taken to be bred." The

family kept up their search for about a year, with Paula's sister searching refuges across the country. But the language barrier and distance made the search nearly impossible for Paula, who lives in Oswestry.

The mother-of-five had gone to Rhyl last week with her three grandchildren when she got an email with the subject 'Your Dog'.

After so long, she waved it off as spam, but during a restless night decided to check the message. "It was 4am in the morning and it said 'we've found your dog'," Paula said.

"I didn't know what to do, but then I had

an email from Petlog saying they had found a Parson Terrier. It was Bizkit – they had found him." It is unclear what Bizkit has been through over the last five years.

He was found tied up in Toulouse about three weeks ago, and since then had been sent to a refuge.

He will be driven back by a relay of four English women in France who will look after him for a few days each. "They haven't even accepted any money", said Paula.

Paula said without being microchipped, she would never have been reunited with Bizkit.

FUW fundraisers gear up for Snowdon challenge

WALES'S highest mountain is calling Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW) fundraisers once again.

This time round the FUW team will tackle six routes in 12 hours, in order to raise funds for the union president's charities Alzheimer's Society Cymru and The Farming Community Network (FCN).

Snowdon is one of Wales's most famous landmarks, standing tall over the village of Llanberis. It is part of a close-knit family of jagged peaks and can offer views of Snowdonia, Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Ireland.

Tackling the 1,085-metre giant on June 22 fundraisers will have the choice whether to walk one, two or three peaks on the day.

The first ascent will take fundraisers up the Watkin Path and down the Pyg Track, the second climb will go up the Miners Path and down the Snowdon Ranger Path and the final route will take walkers up the Rhyd Ddu Path and down the Llanberis Path.

"This is another fantastic challenge our staff and members have set themselves to raise money for our charities. If you are interested in

joining the team, either by walking or in a supporting role, please contact your local county office for more information," said FUW president Glyn Roberts.

FCN regional director in Wales David Williams said: "As a charity, we are amazed by the lengths the FUW are going to in order to raise money for FCN and we are incredibly grateful to them for taking on this incredible challenge. The money raised will go such a long way in order to help FCN in its support of the farming community throughout Wales. We wish every-

one taking part the very best of luck." Natalie De Maid, regional community fundraising manager for Alzheimer's Society Cymru said: "The FUW have set themselves an epic target with their Snowdon climb. Dementia is now the UK's biggest killer, with someone developing it every three minutes.

"Alzheimer's Society Cymru are extremely grateful for the FUW's continued support which will directly help the 45,000 people living with dementia in Wales. Alzheimer's Society is urging everyone to unite against dementia."

New group takes over roads maintenance contract

A MULTI-million-pound road maintenance contract for Shropshire has changed hands. The Shropshire Highways Alliance is made up of Shropshire Council, WSP – the council's engineering consultant, and Kier – the council's new highways maintenance contractor. Kier will now be responsible for highways projects and schemes, pothole repair, gritting, bridge maintenance, grass cutting, drainage, street lighting, emergency responses, vehicle maintenance and more. Kier will work closely with Shropshire Coun-

cil and WSP in the new alliance, and people will soon see the Shropshire Highways name and logo on vehicles, on signage at the county's highways depots, and on the hi-vis jackets and hard hats worn by staff. The contract is for seven years with the option of a further three individual years based on performance. Its value is approximately £21 million per year. Kier was awarded the contract in late 2017 following a lengthy and detailed procurement

process. It takes over from Ringway, with most of Ringway's staff transferring to Kier. Steve Davenport, Shropshire Council's cabinet member for highways and transport said: "We look forward to working closely with them in the years ahead in the new Shropshire Highways alliance. "We're confident we have found the best contractor for this work, one that will help us to deliver the best possible highways maintenance services for the people of Shropshire. "Since the contract was awarded last autumn

we've been working closely with Kier to ensure a smooth transfer and that all the appropriate arrangements were in place. "This means that Kier are ready and able to begin work straight away." Dave Merrick, Kier's managing director for local authority highways, said: "We are really looking forward to working with Shropshire Council and WSP to deliver results for residents and businesses in Shropshire. We have been working hard during the mobilisation period and we are ready to hit the ground running."

Golfers pitch in with cash



Amanda Kinsey collects the cheque from golf club captain David Thomas

NIGHTINGALE House Hospice has received a cheque for £3,400 from Oswestry's Mile End Golf Club, following its annual charity day. The event, together with a sportsman's evening with guest speaker footballer Alan Kennedy at the Wynnstay Hotel, raised funds for two other good causes, Hope House Children's Hospice and the John Hartson Grab Cancer by the Balls Testicular charity. The fundraiser was organised by golf club captain David Thomas when he was vice captain last year and his many volunteers. David said: "We had a brilliant day with 120 golfers taking part and 100 people attending the event at the Wynnstay. Club members and golfers from local businesses supported us and everyone really enjoyed it. "As vice-captain I chose Nightingale House as myself and family have a close affiliation with the hospice. "The care my grandmother and our family received was second to none and really helped us cope at such a difficult time. It

takes a lot of work to organise a charity golf day, but it's worth it to know the money raised is being used for patients and families that might need the hospice like we did." Amanda Kinsey, area fundraiser for the hospice, said the funds will go a long way to providing support and care for patients and families in need. She added: "David and everyone from Mile End Golf club has done a great job raising such a fantastic amount of money for Nightingale House as well as other local charities. Without help and support like this from local people, organisations and companies we would be unable to provide the care and support our patients and families need. "We are extremely grateful to all those who choose to support our charity and keep our doors open for those who need us most. "No one knows if they may need the hospice and our fundraising can never stop as we need to find 80 per cent of our running costs ourselves."

£5m expansion will shape hospice future

SEVERN Hospice says a £5 million expansion and enhancement plan of its facilities and services will take its care beyond wards and into the future. The charity, which cares for families in Shropshire and Mid Wales living with an incurable illness, now cares for four out of five patients in their homes rather than on its wards, with more people being looked after for longer, and with a greater range of conditions and more complex needs. Its response is to expand its two hospice sites in Telford and Shrewsbury so they offer more services to people who need its care but are not staying overnight. And the community is being asked to show its support by

continuing to donate and raise funds. Planners have approved proposals at Apley Castle, Telford, which will extend the building, enhancing visitor and communal spaces, and allow a larger therapy area for day patients. Some work to add more capacity is already taking place now. Meanwhile, at Bicton, Shrewsbury, the charity has approval for a new building to house therapy suites, treatment rooms, visitor facilities, learning resources and rehabilitation services. The schemes at Telford and Shrewsbury are jointly part of the hospice's Living Well concept – where patient care and support extends well beyond wards and inpatient services, enabling and supporting people to live as well as they can within the con-

straints of a terminal illness. Chairman of the charity's board of trustees, Tony Cordery, said: "This will be the largest single investment we've made since we built our Telford hospice. "Since then, we've cared for more than 30,000 people and their families and have seen their needs change and grow. "Our services today are so much more community based and this will only be more so in future. We need to be ready for that so we have developed our Living Well plans; we need to be clear that we are there to support people here and at home." Detailed design work and development costs are being worked up so the charity knows the precise size of the fundraising challenge it has ahead.

Chief's vow on future of 999 services

POLICE and Crime Commissioner John Campion has said his fire service takeover will improve both emergency services.

Mr Campion has written an open letter to the Chronicle's sister paper the Shropshire Star amid rising opposition to the move. He will take on responsibility for Shropshire Fire Service from this summer after winning Government approval for the move. The decision was opposed by the county's fire authority, which will be disbanded. He will also take over Hereford and Worcester Fire Service, leading to councillors to threaten a judicial review to block an "undemocratic and hostile takeover". Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd approved the move for Mr Campion to control both police and fire services in the West Mercia region, describing it as "a real opportunity to improve the services provided to local people". Mr Campion moved to reassure the people of Shropshire, insisting that he will improve the front-line service. He said: "I anticipated there would be mixed views. People naturally have concerns about potential uncertainty around what all this could mean and what these changes will bring." He said police and fire should work closer together and in many cases could be sharing the same building. He added: "I will never compromise the safety of the public. It was not only a must of mine, but a must of the business case that if savings could be made then it can never be at the expense of the public's safety."

Report by Mark Andrews

"I also want to ensure that the firefighters are still getting all the support they need. The implementation stage will only come after we get the planning stage right. "Our existing fire authorities have laid good foundations to build from, for which we are all grateful. I will now aim to deliver the improvements I've outlined throughout this process and work tirelessly to make sure 'potential' benefits on paper become realities." "As commissioner I will always make sure that our emergency services are at the heart of our communities, keep us safe, whilst making sure that we're as efficient as we can be. "It certainly isn't about local councillors or me as commissioner – my drive in having the difficult discussions about changes to fire governance has solely been about making sure we're delivering the best long term results for the communities, and right services to keep our communities safe. Yes, collaboration between the two services currently exists, but it doesn't go far enough to maximise the possible benefits to our communities. In towns across West Mercia we have police and fire stations alongside each other, when they could just be sharing a building. For example, by doing this it not only removes unnecessary resources but allows police and fire to share data about incidents, as well as share expertise. I want to make sure as much as your money as possible is spent on frontline fire and police activities. "Most importantly, the key detail here is you the public and the service you receive."

Bells from firm will ring out to mark end of war anniversary

BELLS from Shropshire will peal out across Britain to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 2020. The British Ironwork Centre at Aston near Oswestry has joined forces with Bruno Peek, the UK's Pageant Master, to organise a nationwide Peal of Bells in 2020 to mark Victory in Europe day which heralded the end of fighting on the continent. Town criers and town and par-

ish councils across Britain are expected to be involved in the event which will see thousands of the specially engraved hand bells ring out. Mr Peek, who works closely with the royal family, is also involved in this year's, Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute, on November 11 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. That event will include a Chelsea Pensioner ringing one of the

British Ironworks bells as part of the Nation's Tribute. After providing the bell, the Shropshire tourist attraction has now been asked to produce up to 8,000 bells for the VE 75 event in 2020 that will be individually engraved. Those taking part will purchase a bell, with £10 going to charity. Clive Knowles, chairman of the British Ironwork Centre, said he was honoured to be involved in such a big event.

Charity is flying high after it is given praise

MIDLANDS Air Ambulance Charity has been praised for how it runs and how it cares for staff and volunteers.

The charity has been accredited with the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations quality mark level 2, after a review of the organisation was undertaken in November 2017. Its board was recognised as being 'active and experienced', and directors 'enthusiastic'.

Team working was noted as being embedded throughout the organisation in systems, procedures and practices. The report also saw effective charity governance, communication and systems in place throughout the organisation, to record activities and monitor financial activities. After interviewing staff and volunteers, high morale was reported throughout the organisation.

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's corporate partner, Phoenix Group, assisted with the application by analysing questionnaires sent internally, facilitating workshops to formulate opinions of staff and conducting interviews.

Angela Watkins, director of business support for the charity, said: "We're all so pleased to have gained this highly sought-after recognition and we're very proud of how far our organisation has come over the past 27 years."

Hundreds of youngsters seek abuse help

HUNDREDS of children sought help from Childline volunteers in the West Midlands last year after being sexually abused by another young person, the NSPCC has revealed.

New figures show that last year there were 457 counselling sessions hosted in the region for young people who had experienced sexual abuse by a friend, boyfriend or girlfriend, an ex-partner or another young person. The national total was 3,004. Almost half were children aged between 12 and 15 – but 114 were with children aged 11 and under. Many of the counselling sessions were undertaken by volunteers at Childline's Birmingham base, who are able to speak to children from across the UK.

The NSPCC said older children are vulnerable to suffering the abuse in different places, including school, at home, at parties and online, while younger ones are more likely to experience it as one-off incident at primary school.

Some teachers who witness peer sexual abuse have used the NSPCC Helpline to say they need more support in how to deal with these situations.

NSPCC chiefs have now called for revamped and reformed relationship and sex education to be incorporated into the national curriculum as quickly as possible.

Grant aid boost to slaughterhouses

THE Welsh Government has announced a £1.1 million grant aid scheme for small and medium size slaughterhouses in Wales. Cabinet secretary for environment, planning and rural affairs Lesley Griffiths AM made the announcement that will help the long term survival of slaughterhouses in Wales. Wyn Evans, chairman of the NFU Cymru Livestock Board, welcomed the move and said: "Slaughterhouses and processing plants are key players in the red meat supply chain and help contribute to a growing Welsh food industry. "It is essential to have a mix of large, medium and small slaughterhouses in Wales."

Housing move gets formal go-ahead

SOCIAL housing tenants in Powys no longer have the right to buy their property following changes to national legislation. Leader Rosemarie Harris said: "It would be counter productive to invest in new building projects while the right to buy was in place taking properties out of the social tenant market."

Health

Future Fit talks 'will not be a referendum'

THE choice of Telford or Shrewsbury for the county's £312 million emergency centre "may not follow what the public want", a council leader has said.

Councillor Peter Nutting, leader of Shropshire Council, issued a call for realism ahead of the Future Fit consultation, warning that it will not be a "referendum" on the public's favourite option. The comments come as consultation on the Future Fit options for where the county's major hospital services are based is set to begin.

Councillor Nutting said that the decision should be led by the county's medical officials, who he said are best placed to choose.

He said: "I think there will be two options but I do not think the public should regard this as a referendum. It really will be for the hospital services to make their own mind up. It should be clinically led and we have to accept they may not follow what the public want, but what they do will be in the best interests of the people of Shropshire."

"I am very, very pleased that our MPs and health services have got us £312 million to spend on our health services in Shropshire and I hope the matter will be dealt with expediently."

Hold meetings over proposals

CAMPAIGNERS are calling on people to organise their own meetings to discuss the Future Fit proposals.

But Green Party councillors and campaigners are working with Shropshire Defend Our NHS and urging people to set up their own meetings to ensure they fully understand the facts behind the proposals.

Shropshire councillor Julian Dean said: "We want to make sure that people can clearly discuss and understand the issues without the spin that our health trust leadership and MPs are putting on the proposals."

"Local meetings in community centres, front rooms, sports clubs, WIs, trade unions or any community group will help true local engagement in the consultation."

"We and the Shropshire Defend Our NHS team can provide speakers and materials to explain the full range of issues at stake, issues which we believe are being glossed over in the official Future Fit consultation process."

People interested in organising a meeting are asked to contact Shropshire Defend Our NHS on 07900 411769.

Trust praised for infections fight

THE trust that runs Shropshire's two main hospitals is waging war on hospital infections.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust has been praised by NHS bosses for reducing E. coli bloodstream infections by more than 10 per cent.

The infection can cause diarrhoea, blood in faeces, vomiting, stomach cramps and fever.

New figures show SaTH has also helped to drive down the number of inaccurate clostridium difficile (C. diff) results by using a new tool.

Ruth May, executive director of nursing at NHS Improvement, has congratulated staff at the trust for their "excellent contribution" towards reducing E. coli bloodstream infections.

She said the trust was one of 59 which had achieved a 10 per cent or greater reduction.

Deirdre Fowler, director of nursing, midwifery and quality at SaTH, said it was down to the "exceptionally hard working and compassionate workforce". She said: "Infection rates can be cut with better hygiene and improved patient care. I would like to thank each and every member of staff; your commitment enables us to provide first class care to our local communities."

Meanwhile, laboratory assistants have helped to reduce the number of inaccurate C. diff test results at SaTH by 13 per cent in the space of a month.

Financial reprieve on offer to health chiefs – if millions of pounds in savings can be made

Report by Lisa O'Brien

end the current financial year with an annual deficit of no more than £13.3 million.

Chief finance officer Claire Skidmore said that if it meets its target the CCG will be given £13.3 million by a new commissioner sustainability fund to offset that year's debt.

This would avoid the organisation falling further into the red with its finances. But the plans show that the CCG would also need to make more than £22 million in savings in 2018/19 to reach its target.

Areas such as commissioning, contracting and prescribing would be looked at.

A report to the governance board by Ms Skidmore claims making such savings would be "hugely challenging but should be, to a large extent, deliverable".

Dr Julian Povey, chairman of the CCG, told board members at a meeting last week that they would need to make sure any impact to patient care was kept to a minimum.

The plans have yet to be signed off by the governance board but members supported the work carried out so far.

The meeting was told that some risks remain within the plan and further work is needed to offset a level of 'unmitigated risk'.

In a report to the board, Ms Skidmore said: "The CCG is expected to deliver a control total

of £13.3 million deficit in 2018/19 and in doing so meet all of the 'business rules' for CCGs. If the CCG is able to meet the requirements of the fund it will be allowed to access funds to offset the in-year deficit.

"Hence this would stem the accumulation of debt to be repaid in future years."

"It is therefore imperative that the CCG sets a realistic plan that the governing body believe to be deliverable in order to maximise our opportunity to release these funds and help to deliver the CCG back to financial balance."

Health bosses previously said a huge rise in the price of drugs and challenges within the out-of-hours GP service Shropdoc had added to its financial pressures over the past year.

Eye treatment delays 'may lead to permanent sight loss'

Report by Lucy Todman

CONCERNS have been raised about delays to vital sight-saving treatment at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

The Macular Society has obtained documents in which senior hospital staff confirm it is a "significant issue" in the ophthalmology department.

It has said that the delays could lead to "irreversible vision loss" for some patients.

The documents date as far back as November 2016. In May 2017, the trust papers show 128 patients with deteriorating eyesight waited longer than they should according to national guidelines.

Prompt treatment for wet age-related macular degeneration is vital as once vision is lost it usually cannot be restored.

In September 2017, an email noted the trust was "going nowhere fast" in trying to reform services for patients with wet AMD.

A report the following month said there was a "significant issue" within the ophthalmology department and "large numbers of patients are waiting longer than clinically recommended for follow up appointments".

Demand

Another paper in November 2017 said that the delays could "lead to irreversible vision loss".

There also appears to be a number of reasons for the delays, including staff shortages and increasing demand for wet macular degeneration treatment.

Cathy Yelf, chief executive of the Macular Society said urgent action was essential to address the delays.

Nigel Lee, chief operating officer at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, said: "We are working hard to implement a one-stop model within the trust's ophthalmology department for the treatment of our patients with AMD, and we are working closely with patients and families, and key partners such as the Macular Society, as we develop our plans."

"The correct procedures and assurances have to be in place prior to rolling out any change in order to safeguard our patients, which is taking longer than hoped."

"However, we would like to reassure all of our patients that their safety remains our top priority."

Elvis-loving patients say thank you very much



Patients on ward 16 at Princess Royal Hospital have been enjoying Elvis-themed exercise classes

PATIENTS have been taking part in exercise classes to music from the 40s and 50s as part of a drive to boost their recovery.

Patients on Ward 16 at Princess Royal Hospital in Telford have been taking part in gentle exercises to the music of Elvis Presley, the Big Bopper and Eddie Cochran as part of a drive to end what is known as "PJ Paralysis".

The "70 Days to End PJ Paralysis" campaign has been launched by England's top nurse Professor Jane Cummings.

Its aim is to get people back home to their loved ones living much happier and fuller lives.

The campaign is aimed to combat problems associated with a long stay in a hospital bed, such as loss of muscle strength and infections.

The idea is also intended to speed up recovery and get patients home sooner.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust launched its own "end PJ paralysis" movement in March 2017.

Jane Smith, from Craven Arms, and Liz Davies, from Telford, are two of the patients who have been taking part in the classes, which are followed by a communal lunch to allow the patients to socialise.

Enjoy

Liz said: "I enjoy the classes, it makes a nice change. Without being rude, being in hospital can be quite boring, so this is good."

Jane added: "I think it's great. I really enjoy doing the exercises."

Another patient, Sara Richardson, said she thought the move to get people out of their pyjamas and into their normal clothes was important.

"It makes me feel more of a human, less of a patient," she said.

Deirdre Fowler, director of nursing, midwifery and quality at SaTH, said: "It's really important that patients who are able try to maintain a normal routine while staying in hospital, including wearing their normal clothes during the day and getting out of bed."

"For people over 80, 10 days in a bed ages muscles by 10 years. One week of bed-rest results in 10 per cent muscle loss, which could make the difference between dependence and independence."

"Other harms of bed rest include higher risk of thrombosis or delirium, pressure sores, infection or loss of muscle usage."

Several patients left waiting on trolleys for hours

A DOZEN patients were left waiting on trolleys for more than 12 hours at Shropshire's A&E departments in February, a new report has revealed.

The figure was revealed in a paper presented to Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group's governance board.

It also confirmed that a total of 57 patients have waited on trolleys for longer than 12 hours between October last year and February this year.

It comes after Shrewsbury and Telford Hos-

pital NHS Trust faced significant pressure over the winter period.

In January it was ranked the worst in the country for A&E waiting times.

Figures presented to Shropshire's CCG governance board last week showed a marginal improvement in February, although nearly a third of patients still had to wait longer than the four-hour A&E government target.

A clinical decisions unit, which aims to help the situation, has recently opened at Telford's Princess Royal Hospital and is a dedicated

area patients can access while waiting for further tests.

The trust has also faced considerable staffing problems and issues with discharging patients.

But SaTH, which runs PRH and Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, recently launched a campaign aiming to boost the number of patients being discharged as soon as they are medically fit to leave. SaTH's chief executive Simon Wright previously said the trust's hospitals are having to cope with more than 100

extra patients than they have capacity for.

He said that a major problem is the length of time it takes to discharge patients compared with admitting them.

The trust reported a number of improvements after the first week of its 'Let's Crack It' fortnight. During the first four days, the number of stranded patients – those in hospital for seven days or more – reduced from more than 350 to 258. The campaign aimed to test new ideas and work differently in order to improve "patient flow".

Individually designed detached bungalow comes with annexe

Nant Y Coed at Leighton near Welshpool is an individually designed detached bungalow with a self-contained annexe in 0.66 acre, large gardens and a 2.55 acre paddock.

It is for sale through Balfours at £445,000.

"This individually designed, 21st century build offers wonderful views from a plot chosen by the current vendors", said Balfours' agent Duncan Scobie.

He added: "Nant Y Coed is in a slightly elevated position just outside Welshpool, in the upper reaches of the Severn Valley near the border between England and Wales.

"It is a wonderful location just over a mile from the market town of Welshpool and less than 20 miles from Shrewsbury and Oswestry."

The property briefly comprises a spacious entrance hall with access to all rooms.

The kitchen is well equipped and there is an adjoining dining room.

The sitting room has glazing to three aspects, providing a delightful light room with fireplace.

There are three bedrooms, one en-suite and a bathroom, all also accessed off the hallway.

Beyond the kitchen a utility room links with a large garage and WC.

The first floor annexe can be accessed both from a staircase in the main reception hall and via an outside staircase to a balcony.

The annexe's accommodation briefly comprises of a large living room, inner hall, kitchenette, bathroom and double bedroom with built-in wardrobes.

Duncan added: "This property is made all the more attractive with extensive landscaped gardens and a 2.55 acre paddock."

KEY FEATURES

Bungalow with annexe

Paddock

Large garden

Wonderful views

Three bedrooms

LEIGHTON

£445,000



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17th century home offers highly flexible accommodation

HOPE
£725,000

Little Hope, at Hope, Leighton near Welshpool is a 17th century cottage that has undergone a large extension.

Currently run as a bed and breakfast business, its flexible layout means it also provides for two co-habiting families, with separate quarters. In a design which flows with exceptional clarity and focus as a property with an option for two halves, it is for sale through Balfours at £725,000.

The main cottage comprises a porch, a large sitting room with an inglenook fireplace, woodburner and French doors. Adjacent is the library with glazing and views to two aspects and the study – a cosy hideaway. The morning room is the central point of the ground floor from which the stairs ascend to three bedrooms and a family bathroom. Beyond the morning room, the dining room is partially open plan to the kitchen, achieving a fabulous social space



with sleek contemporary fixtures in the kitchen. A second study, cloakroom/WC and utility complete the ground floor accommodation.

Duncan Scobie of Balfours, said: "Evelyn and Mike Gregory have nurtured Little Hope to create a fresh and spacious home, together with a highly successful bed and breakfast business. The latter is run as Long Mountain Bed and Breakfast, which has received many awards and certificates of excellence, from Visit Wales and Trip Adviser. The guest accommodation reflects this, it provides three spacious double bedrooms, one with an en-suite bathroom and the other two with en-suite shower rooms. A large guest dining/lounge spanning nearly six metres square and an independent guest kitchen allow the guest accommodation to be run totally separately; or for an extended family to enjoy."

Contact Balfours on 01743 353511.



Recently modernised home within walking distance of town

OSWESTRY
£325,000 >>>

A recently modernised three-bedroomed detached home within walking distance of Oswestry has a lovely outlook across Oswestry Cricket Ground.

Having well-proportioned accommodation, the property on Morda Road is for sale through Bowen Son & Watson at £325,000. With gas central heating and double glazing, it has an entrance hall, a cloakroom/WC, a lounge, kitchen, breakfast area, a dining room and a sun room. There are three good-sized bedrooms and a family bathroom. Outside the garden has an enclosed lawn area with a patio. There is a gravelled driveway to the front and a rear driveway leading to the double garage with electric doors.

The town centre is a short walk away and has a host of shops, restaurants and other amenities.

Contact Bowen Son & Watson on 01691 652367.



Detached house with valley views comes with a large decked area

GARTH
£374,950 <<<

An individual detached house with valley views and first floor open plan living, Tyn-Y-Pistyll at Garth, Glyn Ceiriog, comes with a large timber decked area, landscaped gardens and woodland.

It is for sale through Morris Marshall & Poole at £374,950. Briefly the property comes with three bedrooms, a shower room and a bathroom.

A turning timber-built staircase rises up from the entrance hall to the upper level lobby with a tiled floor and external door to the rear.

Access leads through to the living area which has a multi-fuel stove fitted to the slate built fireplace, being dual aspect with a large picture window to the rear and concealed radiators. An open plan approach leads through to the dining/kitchen.

Contact Morris Marshall & Poole on 01691 679595 for more information.

Semi detached former bakery is located in a semi rural position

WESTON
£225,000 >>>

A semi-detached former bakery, 1 The Bakery at Weston near Oswestry is a recently renovated Grade II listed semi-detached house located in a semi-rural position.

Having three bedrooms and an Air Source heating system, it is for sale through JJ Dell & Co at £225,000 with no chain. The property has new timber double glazed window units and under floor heating to the first floor. The reception hall has ceramic tiled flooring, as does the cloakroom/WC and a study area which also has a deep storage cupboard. The breakfast kitchen has modern fitted cottage-style units, a stainless steel single drainer unit with mixer taps, ample worktop space, plumbing for a washing machine, a four-ring hob and oven with an extractor, plumbing for a dishwasher, a side door to car parking and a garden.

Contact JJ Dell & Co on 01691 653437 for more details.



Perfect country retreat enjoys outstanding views

MOELFRE
£595,000

A perfect country retreat, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, Y Dafarn at Moelfre, has four bedrooms and outstanding countryside views.

Overlooking Moelfre Lake, it is for sale through Town & Country at £595,000 with no chain. A highly desirable and attractive four bedroom detached family home, it sits in three acres of fields and gardens. Its accommodation briefly comprises a reception room, a living room, a shower room, a kitchen/breakfast room, a laundry, an orangery, a study, a master bedroom with an en-suite, three further bedrooms and a bathroom. To the outside there are beautiful gardens leading to the lake, tandem and double garages, ample off-road parking, outbuildings and a sun terrace. Its elegant entrance hallway has a stone fireplace (not working), part panelled walls, a beam and stairs off. The sitting room has a beamed ceiling, a brick fireplace with an oil fired stove and alcove cupboards. The shower room is a fantastic luxury space with a tiled floor, wash hand basin on vanity unit, WC, walk-in shower with a Triton shower unit, a luxury ceiling mounted air body dryer,



a vanity mirror and a beamed ceiling. The kitchen/breakfast room is the beautiful heart of the home. A farm-style kitchen open plan to the living room, it has wooden flooring, free-standing units, a ceramic sink with a mixer tap, a stainless steel oven, a microwave, an induction hob, under-floor heating, plumbing for a dishwasher and a window to the front. Stairs lead off to the first floor. There is access to an attic above the kitchen with a pull down ladder. This is boarded and has lighting. There is also a pantry with a ceramic sink, cold slabs, a beamed ceiling and old pub stone steps. The living room has wooden flooring, under-floor heating, two windows to the side and a storage room off. A fabulous space, the orangery/family room has lovely panoramic views over the lake and grounds.

Contact Town & Country on 01691 679631.



Period property in town retains a wealth of original features

OSWESTRY
£174,950 <<<

In an attractive established residential area, Y Bwthyn on Weston Avenue in Oswestry is a period semi-detached house retaining a wealth of original features.

Within walking distance of the town centre, it is for sale through JJ Dell & Co at £174,950 with no chain. It is also close to schools and colleges.

With gas central heating it has an entrance hall, a living room, dining room, a kitchen, three bedrooms, a bathroom, cloakroom/WC, a front garden and a large rear garden with a patio area and two store sheds.

Outside, the front entrance is approached via a gated pathway and bordered by a low hedge. The front garden is lawned and there is a large lawned garden to the rear with side access, two store sheds and a patio area.

Contact JJ Dell & Co on 01691 653437 for more details.





Decision to cut stamp duty sees boost for first time home buyers

The decision by British Chancellor Philip Hammond to remove stamp duty for most first-time buyers in his Budget Statement last autumn is starting to have an impact with sales rising, new research shows.

Overall, sales to first-time buyers increased from 27 per cent in January to 29 per cent in February, according to the latest monthly report from the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA).

This compares to 22 per cent in 2017 and 24 per cent in 2016, meaning that year-on-year the number of sales to first-time buyers were the best since February 2015.

The NAEA report also shows that the average number of sales agreed per branch rose from seven in January to eight last month, the highest amount since October 2017.

At the same time, the number of prospective house hunters fell by 16 per cent in February from 367 registered per branch to 309, down 28 per cent year-on-year.

In February 2017 agents had 425 house hunters registered per branch.

In line with demand, the number of properties available for sale per branch dropped from 36 in January to 35 in February.

The research also shows that 74 per cent of properties sold for less than the original asking price in February, with only 4 per cent selling for more than the asking price. The rate of properties which sold at asking price stood at 22 per cent, the highest level since June 2016 when 26 per cent of properties went for their asking price.

However, Mark Hayward, NAEA chief executive, warned that while there are signs first-time buyers are being encouraged by the stamp duty change more still needs to be done to help people onto the housing ladder.

"Since the Chancellor cut stamp duty for first time buyers, there have been a good level of sales to the group, but they haven't rocketed.

"As we said in last month's Housing Report, our members have noticed first-time buyers holding off on making purchases since the rule was introduced, opting instead to save for longer to maximise the full stamp duty relief," he said.

"This may be one reason why sales are up but not as high as we might expect; the other reason is that the cost of buying is still very high, and first time buyers are still finding it difficult to save for their deposit," he pointed out.

"As the cost of living continues to rise, with consumer price inflation standing at 2.5 per cent in February, we still have a long way to go to make the dream of owning a home accessible to all, but this is definitely a step in the right direction," he added.

Councils given new powers to get empty houses back in use

New legislation gives councils in England the power to take action against the owners of homes that lie empty for more than two years.

They are being given the power to double the council tax payable on properties in a move that ministers hope will bring thousands of properties onto the housing ladder for sale or to rent.

It is estimated that there are over 200,000 homes that have been empty for some considerable time. Some 216,000 have been empty for six months, 23,000 for five years and 11,000 for more than 10 years.

"It is simply wrong that while there are 200,000 long-term empty properties across the country thousands of families are desperate to secure a place to call home," said Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak.

Harmful

"This new power will equip councils with the tools they need to encourage owners of long-term empty property to bring them back into use and at the same time tackle the harmful effect they have on communities through squatting, vandalism and anti-social behaviour," he added.

Since 2013 local authorities have been able to charge an extra 50 per cent council tax and this now rises to 100 per cent of homes empty for two years or more.

But the rules mean they cannot levy the charge on homes that are on the market for sale or rent.



There are also exemptions which include an owner living in Armed Forces accommodation, annexes that are part of a main property, an owner going into care and homes empty due to probate.

The plan was announced by Chancellor Philip Hammond in his Autumn Budget

statement. However, campaigners have warned that help is needed to get empty homes fit for habitation as many have fallen into disrepair.

A fifth of empty homes in England are in the North West, according to research from the National Housing Federation

(NHF), much of them in areas of economic decline, lacking transport links and with few jobs.

"It can't be right to leave property empty when so many are desperate for a place to live.

Research reveals refurbishment can add up to £50,000 to prices

It is possible to add almost £50,000 to the value of a home in the UK in just seven days, according to new research into what property projects are most useful for home owners.

Removing an internal wall to create an open plan kitchen and diner can add up to £48,417 in seven days to an averagely priced home in some areas while building a garden room or outside playground for the kids can add £35,611 in 14 days to an averagely priced home in others.

The research from the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) and the HomeOwners Alliance (HOA) also says that investing in kitchen improvements such as new flooring, a new worktop and new cabinet doors could boost prices by up to £26,838.

According to Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, spending less than £3,500 on the creation of an open plan kitchen and diner is worth the effort.

"By investing in low cost, high return projects, not



only will you make your home a more pleasant place to live, you'll also be increasing its value significantly.

"Better still, these projects take no time at all so the hassle factor will be kept to an absolute minimum," he pointed out.

He added that the FMB has a free Find a Builder service and home owners can be assured that all new members of the FMB are vetted and independently inspected before they are allowed to join.

The research is encouraging news for home owners, according to Paula Higgins, chief executive of the HOA.

"Improving your home to make it more enjoyable to live in can also give you a big financial boost when it is time to sell," she said.

"There is a caveat though as if your primary aim is to increase the value of your home, you should consult the experts in order to ensure you will see a return," she added.

Developers urged to consider wildlife

With new housing building continuing to rise in the UK, a set of guidelines have been produced to show how development can reverse decades of wildlife and habitat decline.

The Wildlife Trusts has drawn up the report because it believes that the natural environment must be put at the heart of planning to encourage developers to embrace the idea of greener and more inspirational homes. It suggests that the emphasis should be on where and how homes are built, and not just on numbers and says that it is possible to have the homes needed without giving up on nature.

"We're calling on the Government and local authorities to build beautiful, nature friendly communities in the right places," said Rachel Hackett, living landscapes development manager for The Wildlife Trusts.

"Over the past century we have lost natural habitats on an unprecedented scale. Yet nature has its own innate value. It also makes us happy and we depend on the things that it gives us. Our new guidelines show that it's possible to have both, so people can enjoy birdsong, reap the benefits of rain gardens which soak up floodwater, and plants that bees and other pollinators need to survive," she explained.

"With good design the costs of doing this are a tiny proportion of the overall cost of a housing development, but represent a big investment for the future."

The report explains how it is possible to create nature friendly housing by planting wildlife rich community green spaces, walkways, gardens, verges, roofs, wetlands and other natural features, all of which improve people's health and quality of life too.

Peer calls for zero tolerance over anti-Semitism

THE Labour Party and Facebook need to do more to tackle anti-Semitism, according to peer and top legal expert Lord Carlile.

Baron Carlile of Berriew, a former Montgomeryshire MP, has said that there should be a “zero tolerance” approach to anti-Semitism, and that casual racism should be a “red card” for people wanting to participate in British politics. The comments came after a wave of criticism for the Labour Party over its handling of anti-Semitic comments, sparked by Jeremy Corbyn’s support for an offensive mural.

He subsequently said he did not support the mural, and had not looked at it properly before offering his support. He also deleted his own personal Facebook account.

It was reported he had been a member of several groups which contained offensive comments about Jewish people – although he insisted he had not been aware of the posts.

Now Baron Carlile, who represented Montgomeryshire as MP from 1983 until 1997, has called for action over those responsible for anti-Semitic abuse. He said: “Despite the views of

the great majority of Labour politicians I know who are horrified by this, Jeremy Corbyn’s high command is infected by anti-Semitism and an inability to deal with it.

“There must be zero tolerance. It happens to be anti-Semitism, but it could be any form of racism that would be equally offensive. Plainly Facebook has to deal with this kind of posting just as it has to deal with violent extremism. It is a failure of Facebook and it’s a failure of the leadership of the Labour Party.”

Lord Carlile, who has formerly held a role as

the country’s independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, said comments made on some non-official Labour Party supporting groups could be worthy of prosecution.

He said that the post “Adolf, you should have finished the job mate” could break the law as set out in the Public Order Act 1986, which prohibits “publishing written material” intended to stir up racial hatred. The peer said Mr Corbyn’s reaction to concerns over anti-Semitism in Labour supporters had been one of a leader “responding feebly” to the problem.

Firm offers work experience



Students Daniel Hopkins, Stephanie Matthews and Tommy O’Callaghan in front of the Spoon Gorilla statue at the British Ironwork Centre during their work experience

SEVERAL North Shropshire College independent living foundation studies students have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to gain a valuable two weeks of work experience at the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry.

The students helped out with various activities in different departments during their two weeks with the company.

They developed their customer service skills in the cafe serving customers and were kept busy assisting showroom staff with stock handling and setting out merchandise as well as helping the house-keeping staff with caretaking and cleaning duties around the site.

Sarah McManus, personal assistant to the visitor attraction’s chairman Clive Knowles, said: “It has been great to support

the college in hosting the students here for their two weeks work experience.

“We feel this is an important time to support young people in experiencing the world of work and we hope they have learnt a lot of new and important workplace skills during their time with us.”

Daniel Hopkins, one of the college students, said: “I have really enjoyed my time on work experience.

“I especially liked working in the stockroom and packaging orders for customers.”

The British Ironwork Centre is a leading visitor attraction and has become well known for its eye-catching sculptures including a gorilla made from spoons and its Knife Angel, made from surrendered and donated knives and blades from police forces throughout the UK.

Teacher tells of violence in the classroom

TEACHERS are being spat at, strangled and hit, with bad behaviour hitting “extremely violent” levels, a Shropshire teacher has claimed.

Kelly Watkins, who teaches in a primary school in the Oswestry area, said she is repeatedly called into classrooms to restrain and deal with violent pupils.

The 38-year-old told the NASUWT Conference in Birmingham that a child tried to strangle her with her own scarf.

“In the last two years behaviour in children has increased to an extremely violent level,” she said.

Ms Watkins specialises in helping children with special needs, and has the role of Senco – or Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

She added: “As a Senco, you have that magic wand to be called to a classroom to sort out the problem. As a pregnant Senco I’m still called to the classroom.” Speaking after delegates agreed to call on the union’s executive to consider industrial action to protect staff from violent pupils, Mrs Watkins, described being “spat at, bitten and pinched” during her day-to-day work.

She said she needed to call for help from a colleague after a pupil tried to strangle her with her scarf.

“They pushed the scarf up and said they knew what they were doing,” she said.

“I had to get a colleague to go and get a pair of scissors to get the scarf off.

“Fortunately we didn’t get to that point because I managed to get the scarf off. But it was a learning curve for me because after that it was take off anything – scarf, lanyard, cardigan, necklace – anything that might be used as a weapon.”

Report by Mat Growcott

Mrs Watkins, the only dedicated Senco at her school, said she was repeatedly called to deal with a four-year-old boy who “scratched, gouged eyes, pulled hair”.

She said: “It’s increasingly hard to get children into the right provision because of the hoops needed to get them into the right place

“We are a very good mainstream school and we are getting a lot of children moved to us – equally, we are a mainstream primary school, not a special educational needs school.

“In Key Stage One violence is getting more and more prevalent – more now than ever. The last two years have been the worst I’ve ever had in my 16-year teaching career.

“If you haven’t got the funding to buy in, you can’t get diagnoses.

Chris Keates, NASUWT general secretary, said pupil behaviour was “one of the top concerns” that teachers raise about their jobs.

She said: “Evidence shows teachers are not receiving the support to tackle these issues.

“Where a pupil is known to exhibit violent and disruptive behaviour, a risk assessment should be undertaken and action taken to support the pupil to address their behaviour and to protect other pupils and staff.

“In too many cases no effective assessment is ever undertaken. Employers who fail to disclose safety information leave themselves vulnerable to legal challenge and industrial action, but more importantly they are behaving recklessly with the health and well-being of staff and other pupils and this simply cannot be justified.”

Restaurant owners host another fundraising night for charities

THE owners of an Indian restaurant are set to hold a charity evening to mark their 42nd anniversary.

George and Julie Miah have been running the Simla restaurant in Beatrice Street in Oswestry for over four decades and in recent years they have been organising charity evenings to raise money for local charities.

This year the couple will be raising money for Hope House and Severn Hospice and tickets

for the event on May 24 are £25, which includes a four course meal and entertainment in the form of a quiz and a Bollywood dancer. Mr Miah said: “We have been here for 42 years and the people of Oswestry have always been very supportive to us.

“In recent years we’ve raised money for charities such as the Wales Air Ambulance and Macmillan and this year we have chosen Hope House and Severn Hospice. The community has

been so good to us, and this is a way of myself, Julie and our children who have worked here, to give something back. Tickets are available for the charity night on (01691) 659880.

The Simla will also host a charity night run by Oswestry Mayor Vince Hunt to raise money for his chosen charities. The curry night, also involving a Bollywood dancer and a quiz, along with a four course meal, will take place on Thursday next week.

Gender pay gap is 30pc at health trust

THE trust running Shropshire’s two main hospitals has reported a gender pay gap of just over 30 per cent.

The figures, released by the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, were for 2016/17.

It shows the average hourly rate of pay for men being £20.56 and £14.29 for women, with men’s bonuses on average amounting to £11,056.17 – nearly double that of women employees. The hourly rate is calculated for each employee based on ‘ordinary pay’ which includes basic pay, allowances and shift premium pay. Bonuses are only applicable to certain groups of medical staff. Health bosses say the figures are “heavily skewed” by the medical staff pay gap.

In Sath’s gender pay gap report, workforce director Victoria Maher said: “If medical staff were removed from the calculations, our female staff, who represent around 80 per cent of the workforce, have a 3.98 per cent higher average rate of pay than male staff.

“In addition, our results related to the payment of bonuses can be accounted for in the allocation of clinical excellence awards and historically discretionary points to medical staff that are permanent additions to remuneration. Medical staff are the only category of staff that are eligible for bonus payments.

“In this category, bonuses paid to male medical staff are higher on average than those paid to female medical staff and as

at March 31, 2017, 111 male medical staff benefitted from Clinical Excellence bonus payments or discretionary points awards as opposed to 29 female medical staff.” She said the trust has been taking action to encourage and support CEA applications from female medical consultants. Health bosses expect to see a reduction in the bonus pay gap between new awards made to men and women in 2017/18.

The report says women’s median hourly rate of pay is also 12.45 per cent lower than men’s.

The median hourly rate is calculated by ranking all employees from the highest paid to the lowest paid, and taking the hourly wage of the person in the middle.

Scheme set to recognise top council tenants

AN award scheme has been set up to highlight the positive difference housing tenants make.

Powys County Council’s Star Tenant Award will be launched to highlight and celebrate the difference tenants make within their local community.

The new competition, which will replace the council’s annual garden competition, could see tenants being rewarded for being a good neighbour, taking pride in their home or estate, for carrying out volunteer work or just going the extra mile.

Awards can be for an individual tenant or a group of tenants together.

Councillor Rosemarie Harris, leader of Powys County Council, said: “I’m delighted that we are introducing a new competition for our council tenants. It is important that the hard work, good deeds and dedication shown by our tenants is rewarded and these awards will recognise their efforts.

“We have decided to introduce this new competition as there had been a decline of entrants to the annual garden competition. Unfortunately, it was in danger of becoming an exclusive celebration of a few talented gardeners and excluding many of our tenants who may have other talents or good work to celebrate.”

Details on the Star Tenant Award will be sent to all tenants.

Farmers are ‘more aware of water issues’

FARMERS’ awareness of water quality issues have improved year-on-year, according to research undertaken by Promar on behalf of Severn Trent Water (STW).

The data incorporates feedback from over 90 farmers from STW priority catchments during 2016 and 2017, said Katherine Filby, STW catchment management planner.

“Following a number of catchment scale trials from 2012, we launched a pioneering catchment management programme in 2015, of farmer support across 27 catchments covering 4,000km² and approximately 4,000 priority farms.

“The programme aimed to increase awareness of the issue of pesticides reaching water sources, and support farmers in making changes to protect and improve water quality in their local catchment.”

In 2015, work to investigate the effectiveness of the programme commenced, said Ms Filby.

“We were keen to understand how our schemes were being received by the farming community and how we could improve them. The research identified that in 2017, 94 per cent of the farmers questioned, can now identify water quality concerns in their area, an increase on the 87 per cent recorded in 2016.”

Village play area to get a revamp

A PLAY area in a village on the Powys and Shropshire border is set for a revamp after plans were approved by planning officers.

Proposals were lodged by Llansilin Playing Fields Association and under delegated powers, planning officers have given the go-ahead for the upgrade to the existing facilities.

New play equipment will be put in to replace unsafe ones, and three new pieces of play equipment will be installed.

A planning statement said: “Due to the existing pieces on site becoming unsafe, the proposal is to dispose of/refurbish some equipment at the existing playground as well as to install three new pieces.”

Tasting night to help school and church

A GIN tasting event is set to take place later this year to raise funds for Montgomery Church in Wales School and Middleton Church.

The event is being held at Montgomery Town Hall from 7pm on Saturday, June 9. To buy a ticket contact (01686) 669971 or go to Bunnery’s Store in Montgomery.



Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup
4.55pm
Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off 5.15pm). Gary Lineker presents coverage of the opening semi-final of this season's competition.

BBC1	
6.00	Breakfast.
10.00	Saturday Kitchen Live. Matt Tebbutt is joined by chefs Gennaro Contaldo and Samin Nosrat, and special guest Chris Packham. Plus, Olly Smith picks the wines to go with the studio dishes.
11.30	The Hairy Bikers' Asian Adventure. Dave Myers and Si King begin a culinary tour of Asia in Hong Kong. (R)
12.00	Football Focus. Dan Walker and guests review the headlines and preview forthcoming fixtures, including the FA Cup semi-finals – Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea v Southampton.
1.00	BBC News; Weather.
1.15	The London Marathon: My Reason to Run. Inspirational amateurs planning to run the marathon this weekend.
1.45	Live Snooker: The World Championship. Coverage of two first-round matches on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, as seeded players Kyren Wilson and Ronnie O'Sullivan begin their campaigns.
4.35	BBC News.
4.45	Midlands Today; Weather.
4.55	Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off 5.15pm). Gary Lineker presents coverage of the opening semi-final of this season's competition, which takes place at Wembley Stadium.
7.15	Pointless Celebrities. Diane Louise Jordan, the Rev Richard Coles, Nancy Dell'Olio, Matt Barbet, Sharron Davies, Mark Foster, Gyles Brandreth and Susan Calman all take part in the unorthodox quiz show. (R)
8.00	The Queen's Birthday Party. A concert in celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's 92nd birthday, live from the Royal Albert Hall, featuring performances by the likes of Tom Jones, Kylie Minogue and Shawn Mendes.
9.40	Mrs Brown's Boys. Dermot's pre-marriage nerves get the better of him, so he locks himself away in a cupboard. Rory's secret is revealed to his mother. (R)
10.10	BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.30	Match of the Day. Dan Walker presents highlights of Saturday's two Premier League fixtures – Watford v Crystal Palace, and West Bromwich Albion v Liverpool.
11.00	MOTD: FA Cup Semi-Final Highlights. Dan Walker presents highlights of Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur in the opening semi-final of this year's competition at Wembley Stadium.
11.20	The Button. Game show set simultaneously in the houses of five UK families, whose members compete to win challenges determined by The Button in the comfort of their living rooms. (R)
11.50	FILM: The Recruit (2003). A hacker is recruited into the CIA and is given a top-secret assignment to root out a mole within the agency's training programme. Thriller, starring Al Pacino and Colin Farrell.
1.40	Weather for the Week Ahead.
1.45	BBC News.



Dad's Army
8.30pm
The vicar and the verger enlist in the Home Guard, but their over-enthusiastic man-management brings the wrath of Warden Hodges down upon the platoon.

BBC2	
6.15	David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R)
6.40	Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. Naomi Wilkinson heads into the Australian Outback. (R)
7.10	The Pets Factor.
7.30	The Designers. A look back at the amazing dens built throughout the series.
8.00	Absolute Genius: Monster Builds.
8.30	Beyond Bionic.
9.00	Robot Wars. Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon present a new format for the contest. (R)
10.00	Live Snooker: The World Championship. The opening session on day one at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield.
12.00	Wanted Down Under. The young family embark on a trial week living in Perth. (R)
12.30	Trust Me, I'm a Doctor. Michael Mosley explores the health benefits of omega-3 fish oils. (R)
1.30	Britain's Biggest Warship. Life on board aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth. (R)
2.30	Top of the Shop with Tom Kerridge. Four food producers with fledgling businesses test out their products. (R)
3.30	Top of the Shop with Tom Kerridge. Four food producers test out their products on the locals in Malhamdale in the Yorkshire Dales. (R)
4.30	Final Score. Round-up of football results.
5.15	Money for Nothing. Sarah Moore rescues a granite workshop from Altrincham Recycling Centre. (R)
6.00	Antiques Road Trip. In Liverpool, Natasha Raskin Sharp hopes for a big hit with a Sgt Pepper-style military jacket, while Charles Hanson finds two maritime-themed stained glass panels. (R)
7.00	Live Snooker: The World Championship. The concluding session on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first-round match involving Mark Selby is scheduled to conclude.
8.00	The Forest. An engineering team is called out to repair a 6-ton logging machine, while the owner of Balloch O'Dee campsite prepares to stage a comedy night. Mark Bonnar narrates.
8.30	Dad's Army. The vicar and the verger enlist in the Home Guard, but their over-enthusiastic man-management brings the wrath of Warden Hodges down upon the platoon. (R)
9.00	Imagine – Habaneros: You Say You Want a Revolution? Part One. Part one of two. Documentary exploring the lives of Havana residents in the wake of Raul Castro stepping down as president of Cuba, leaving the country facing an uncertain future.
10.05	FILM: Testament of Youth (2014). A young woman gives up her place at Oxford University to be a nurse during the First World War. Period drama, starring Alicia Vikander and Kit Harington.
12.05	Snooker: The World Championship.
12.55	Snooker: World Championship Extra.
2.55	Civilisations. (R)
3.55	This Is BBC2.



Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule
7.30pm
Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, who presides over two teams nominally tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion.

ITV	
6.00	CITV: Sooty 6.10 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids 6.20 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.45 Super 4 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures 7.25 The Tom and Jerry Show 7.30 Teen Titans Go! 7.45 Adventure Time 8.00 Thunderbirds Are Go
8.25	ITV News.
8.30	Zoe Ball on Saturday. With Penelope Wilton, Charlie Brooks and Ed Gamble.
9.25	James Martin's Saturday Morning. With guests Lemar and Daniel Galmiche.
11.20	FILM: Nanny McPhee (2005). A widower struggles to control his seven unruly children, until a strange-looking nanny steps in. Period fantasy adventure, with Emma Thompson, Colin Firth and Kelly Macdonald.
1.20	ITV News and Weather; Weather.
1.30	ITV Racing: Live from Ayr. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumanì present coverage of this afternoon's meeting from Ayr Racecourse, including the Coral Scottish Grand National Handicap Steeple Chase at 4.05.
4.30	You've Been Framed! A Clare Balding lookalike marries a horse. (R)
5.00	The Chase. Quiz show. (R)
6.00	ITV News and Weather.
6.15	ITV News Central; Weather.
6.30	Ninja Warrior UK. A special celebrity edition of the obstacle-course challenge, featuring competitors including former Olympic athlete Katharine Merry and Kenzie from Blazin' Squad.
7.30	Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, who presides over two teams nominally tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion.
8.00	Britain's Got Talent. Ant and Dec host the nationwide talent search, which sees a wide variety of acts compete to impress judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams.
9.20	The Keith & Paddy Picture Show. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness recreate Top Gun, with help from Keith Allen, Sarah Parish and Marc Warren.
9.50	ITV News and Weather; Weather.
10.10	FILM: Private Benjamin (1980). A society widow enlists in the army in the hope of finding a new direction, but comes into conflict with her tough commanding officer. Comedy, with Goldie Hawn and Armand Assante.
12.15	Change Your Tune. Baz Ashmawy hosts the musical game show, with contestants including a primary school teacher hoping to inspire his pupils and a Whitney Houston-obsessed hairdresser. (R)
1.05	Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
3.00	Babushka. Game show hosted by Rylan Clark-Neal in which contestants open a set of giant Russian nesting dolls, with some empty and others containing prizes up to £10,000. (R)



Location, Location, Location
4.30pm
Kirstie Allsopp helps a couple looking for a home in Warrington, while Phil Spencer comes to the aid of a Liverpool entrepreneur looking for a very special house in Crosby.

Channel 4	
6.15	Mobil 1: The Grid. Including a look back at last year's Azerbaijan F1 Grand Prix.
6.40	Motor Sport: Volkswagen Racing Cup. Action from Silverstone.
7.05	The King of Queens. Carrie returns to college. (R)
7.30	The King of Queens. Doug makes a rash purchase. (R)
7.55	Everybody Loves Raymond. Frank and Marie decide to move. (R)
8.20	Everybody Loves Raymond. Frank and Marie are evicted. (R)
8.55	Frasier. Unemployment takes its toll on Frasier. (R)
9.25	Frasier. A school reunion fills Frasier with misgivings. (R)
9.55	Frasier. Martin moves in with Niles. (R)
10.30	The Big Bang Theory. Bernadette takes an interest in physics. (R)
11.00	The Big Bang Theory. Leonard's mother visits. (R)
11.25	The Big Bang Theory. Raj lusts after a girl at a party. (R)
11.55	The Simpsons. A trilogy of classical stories. (R)
12.25	The Simpsons. The family visits Brazil. (R)
12.55	The Simpsons. Homer suffers a bout of incontinence. (R)
1.25	Come Dine with Me. Indian-born chocolate scientist Deepti is first to host in Birmingham. (R)
2.35	A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. Searching for a holiday home on Florida's southern Gulf Coast. (R)
3.25	A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. Advice on buying a home in Florida. (R)
4.30	Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer help house-hunters in Warrington and Liverpool. (R)
5.35	The Secret Life of the Zoo. Orangutan sisters Emma and Subis are due to give birth at the same time. (R)
6.30	Channel 4 News.
7.00	The Restoration Man: Best Builds. George Clarke chooses four of his favourite church conversions seen on the programme, from a bohemian artistic retreat to an old fisherman's church. (R)
8.00	Britain's Most Historic Towns. Alice Roberts explores the Norman period of British history in Winchester. She attempts to storm a castle wearing chain mail and investigates the origins of modern surgery.
9.00	FILM: Dirty Grandpa (2016). Premiere. An uptight lawyer is taken on a wild weekend by his fun-loving grandfather, who is determined to make him enjoy life. Comedy, starring Robert De Niro and Zac Efron.
11.00	FILM: Colombiana (2011). An orphan grows up to be an assassin while secretly plotting revenge on the gangsters who murdered her parents. Action thriller, starring Zoe Saldana and Cliff Curtis.
1.00	Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. An Italian restaurant in Florida receives help. (R)
1.50	Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Leela is shocked by the arrival of a new face in the village. (R)
4.00	Building the Dream. (R)
4.55	The Question Jury. (R)
5.50	Steph and Dom's One Star to Five Star. (R)



Football on 5: The Championship
9pm
Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Bolton Wanderers v Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Channel 5	
6.00	Milkshake!: Little Princess 6.10 Wissper 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.30 Milkshake! Monkey 6.35 The Secret Life of Puppies 6.40 Mofy 6.45 Simon 6.55 Simon 7.00 Peppa Pig 7.05 Paw Patrol 7.20 Thomas & Friends 7.30 Fireman Sam 7.40 Olly the Little White Van 7.50 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.10 Paw Patrol 8.20 Nella the Princess Knight 8.40 Noddy: Toyland Detective 8.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.05 Shimmer and Shine 9.25 Digby Dragon 9.40 Peppa Pig
9.50	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.
10.25	The Gadget Show. (R)
11.15	Police Interceptors. (R)
12.15	Police Interceptors. Officers chase a drug dealer on a motorway. (R)
1.15	Police Interceptors. The police chase a gang of would-be jewellery thieves. (R)
2.10	Police Interceptors. The police helicopter joins the search for an armed robber. (R)
3.10	The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R)
4.05	The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A farmer is suspected of killing a family's dogs. (R)
5.05	Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R)
6.00	Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Paul, Steve and Ben make a shocking discovery when they break into a home. (R)
7.00	The Yorkshire Vet Casebook. Julian Norton needs to act fast to save a cow with heart failure, a beagle goes through a difficult birth and a hamster arrives for a simple procedure that ends up proving tricky.
8.00	The Dead Sea Treasure Map Mystery. Cameras observe a team of archaeologists following clues from the Copper Scroll, a map that is thought to lead to a treasure haul estimated to be worth \$3billion. (R)
8.55	5 News Weekend.
9.00	Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Bolton Wanderers v Wolverhampton Wanderers and Cardiff City v Nottingham Forest.
10.00	Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Oldham Athletic and Portsmouth v Charlton Athletic.
10.30	World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera. Footage capturing the destruction and chaos caused by severe weather conditions, featuring first-hand accounts from those who have survived such events. (R)
11.30	Criminals: Caught on Camera. Journalist Nick Wallis joins police forces around the nation to discover how CCTV and technological advances are helping to bring criminals to justice. (R)
12.00	SuperCasino.
3.10	The Yorkshire Vet. (R)
4.00	Made in Yorkshire. (R)
4.45	House Doctor. (R)
5.10	Divine Designs. (R)
5.35	Wildlife SOS. (R)

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The Big Painting Challenge

6pm
The artists travel to Loch Lomond to hone their waterscape skills by painting a boat on the water during a windy day, before creating a full panoramic view of the lake.



Britain's Biggest Warship

8pm
HMS Queen Elizabeth goes on dangerous sea trials for the first time in the North Sea, where every part of the vessel is put to the test and the first aircraft lands on the deck.



The Durrells

8pm
The family plans a party to celebrate Gerry's birthday, but the occasion is invaded by a swarm of mosquitoes. Louisa worries when Spiros locks himself in a room to sing sad songs.



Homeland

9pm
Carrie is forced to choose a side, Keane needs an ally and Saul comes up with an idea. Espionage drama, starring Claire Danes, Mandy Patinkin, Elizabeth Marvel and Linus Roache.



Diana to Meghan: Royal Wedding Secrets

9pm
How previous royal weddings were organised. Kiri Te Kanawa shares her memories of performing at the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.**
7.35 Match of the Day. Dan Walker presents highlights of Saturday's two Premier League fixtures – Watford v Crystal Palace, and West Bromwich Albion v Liverpool. (R)
8.10 MOTD: FA Cup Semi-Final Highlights. Dan Walker presents highlights of Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur in the opening semi-final of this year's competition at Wembley Stadium. (R)
8.30 London Marathon. Gabby Logan presents live coverage of the 38th staging of the annual event on the streets of London, as tens of thousands of runners take on the 26.2-mile course. Coverage continues on BBC2.
2.00 BBC News; Weather.
2.15 Sunday Politics West Midlands. The week's events at Westminster, presented by Sarah Smith. Including a regional round-up.
3.30 Songs of Praise. Josie d'Arby and Sean Fletcher explore Northampton in an episode from the town's All Saints Church. Doreen Lawrence discusses her faith on the 25th anniversary of her son's murder.
4.05 B.O.B.'s Big Break. Animated spin-off from DreamWorks' Monsters vs Aliens film. (R)
4.15 FILM: Madagascar (2005). Various inmates of a city zoo escape captivity, but end up stranded on an island with no clue how to survive. Animated comedy, with the voices of Ben Stiller and David Schwimmer.
5.35 BBC News.
5.50 Midlands Today; Weather.
6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. The artists travel to Loch Lomond to hone their waterscape skills by painting a boat on the water during a windy day, before creating a full panoramic view of the lake.
7.00 Countryfile. Anita Rani reports on traditional crafts in Norfolk, visiting a restored wind pump and meeting reed cutters, milestone restorers and a man who makes cricket bats by hand.
8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Castle Howard in North Yorkshire, where items brought in include a rare jade Buddha and a collection of First World War aviation paintings.
9.00 The Woman in White. New series. Adaptation of Wilkie Collins' novel, starring Ben Hardy as a teacher delving into the mysterious and troubled history of a woman who has escaped from an asylum.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Midlands Today; Weather.
10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman introduces highlights of Arsenal v West Ham United, Stoke City v Burnley, Manchester City v Swansea City and West Bromwich Albion v Liverpool in the Premier League.
11.30 MOTD: FA Cup Semi-Final Highlights. Reshmin Chowdhury presents highlights of Chelsea v Southampton in the second semi-final of this season's competition at Wembley Stadium.
12.00 The Women's Football Show.
12.35 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.40 BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.05 Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein.** The horticulturist plants the first seeds of the year. (R)
6.35 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Anita Rani present the show from Cumbria. (R)
7.30 The Beechgrove Garden. New series. A wildlife photographer who uses her garden as her studio.
8.00 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. Matt Tebbutt presents highlights of the series.
9.00 The Andrew Marr Show.
10.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship. The first-round matches involving Mark Allen and Ronnie O'Sullivan.
12.15 MOTD2 Extra. Mark Chapman presents football discussion.
1.00 Gardeners' World. Monty Don sows seeds in his vegetable garden. (R)
2.00 London Marathon. Concluding live coverage of the 38th staging of the annual event.
2.30 Live Snooker: The World Championship. The first-round matches involving Shaun Murphy and Ali Carter.
6.00 Nature's Biggest Beasts. A look at how being big can sometimes be a burden to some of nature's larger animals, and how they overcome the challenges of their size. Narrated by Miles Jupp. (R)
7.00 London Marathon Highlights. JJ Chalmers presents action from the 38th staging of the annual event, which saw tens of thousands of runners take on the famous 26.2-mile course.
8.00 Britain's Biggest Warship. HMS Queen Elizabeth goes on dangerous sea trials for the first time in the North Sea, where every part of the vessel is put to the test and the first aircraft lands on the deck.
9.00 My Year with the Tribe. Will makes his second trip to Indonesia and meets some other members of the Korowai tribe, only to find their lives are not as traditional as they initially appear.
10.00 Famalam. Sketch show, featuring a constantly thwarted Nigerian philanthropist, a pair of overly amorous daytime TV presenters and MC Scribbler P's take on the Winter Olympics.
10.25 That's the Way, A-Ha, A-Ha, Joe Lycett. A performance from the comedian's award-winning live show, recorded at the Duchess Theatre in London's West End.
11.25 Snooker: The World Championship. The evening session on day two at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, featuring the conclusion of first-round matches involving Kyren Wilson and Marco Fu. Jason Mohammad presents.
12.15 Snooker: World Championship Extra. Hazel Irvine presents extended highlights of matches from the first round on the second day of the ranking tournament at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield.
2.15 Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Chesterfield, chaired by David Dimbleby. (R)
3.15 Sign Zone: Holby City. Frieda forces new trainee Nicky to question what kind of doctor she wants to be. Serena tests Xavier's mettle, putting him in charge of Sheilagh's recovery. (R)
4.15 This is BBC2.

ITV

- 6.00 CITV: Sooty 6.10 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.45 Super 4 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.00 Thunderbirds Are Go 7.25 The Tom and Jerry Show 7.30 Teen Titans Go! 7.45 Adventure Time 8.00 The Haunted Hathaways**
8.25 ITV News.
8.30 Zoe Ball on Sunday. With guests Frank Skinner and Amanda Redman.
9.25 Love Your Garden. (R)
10.00 Peston on Sunday.
10.55 Ninja Warrior UK. A special celebrity edition of the obstacle-course challenge. (R)
11.55 ITV News and Weather; Weather.
12.05 Britain's Got Talent. Ant and Dec host the nationwide talent search. (R)
1.25 Britain's Got More Talent. Stephen Mulhern meets some of the unseen contestants. (R)
2.25 Britain's Brightest Family. Two families compete in the second semi-final. (R)
3.00 The Queen's Green Planet. The ambitious legacy project to create a global network of protected forests. (R)
4.00 Change Your Tune. Baz Ashmawy hosts the musical game show.
5.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. With Rory Bremner, Laura Tobin, Deborah Meaden and Alan Titchmarsh. (R)
6.00 Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, who presides over two teams nominally tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion. (R)
6.30 ITV News and Weather.
6.45 ITV News Central; Weather.
7.00 Little Big Shots. New series. Dawn French hosts a variety show featuring some of the world's most talented children, including a singing trio and a young dog trainer.
8.00 The Durrells. The family plans a party to celebrate Gerry's birthday, but the occasion is invaded by a swarm of mosquitoes. Louisa worries when Spiros locks himself in a room to sing sad songs.
9.00 The Good Karma Hospital. Ruby and Gabriel intervene in a dispute between two fishermen, and Lydia's former mentor asks for her help. Guest starring Sue Johnston (The Royle Family). Last in the series.
10.05 ITV News and Weather; Weather.
10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, featuring reports on the latest issues and interviews with topical guests. (R)
11.20 100 Year Old Driving School. In Ruislip, 91-year-old former teacher Patricia Deacon is determined to prove she is a good driver. There is also a catch up with characters from previous episodes. Last in the series. (R)
11.50 This Time Next Year. Davina McCall meets a 45-year-old man who wants to track down his long-lost half-sister and a grandmother who wants to finally learn to read. (R)
12.40 Jackpot247.
3.00 British Superbike Championship Highlights.
3.50 ITV Nightscreen.
5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

Channel 4

- 6.15 The King of Queens.** Doug finds work as a supply teacher. (R)
6.40 The King of Queens. The strike puts a strain on everyone. (R)
7.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. Ray spics up his sex life. (R)
7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. Debra's dress sense causes problems. (R)
7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond. Ally gets a low grade at school. (R)
8.25 Eat the Week. Simon Rimmer gives a family advice on having a more varied diet. (R)
9.30 Sunday Brunch. With guests Keith Lemon, Frances Barber, Sting and Shaggy.
12.30 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. Singer Craig David joins hosts Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty. (R)
1.30 The Simpsons. Homer and Bart transform the fortunes of a losing racehorse. (R)
2.00 The Simpsons. Maude Flanders is killed. (R)
2.25 The Simpsons. Homer becomes a murder suspect. (R)
2.55 FILM: Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012). Animated fantasy, with the voice of Danny DeVito.
4.35 Location, Location, Location. House-hunting in Amersham and Berkshire. (R)
5.35 Grand Designs. A young architect transforms an old agricultural building in County Down. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Escape to the Chateau. Dick and Angel only have a few weeks to prepare for their wedding, but the chateau is nowhere near ready to receive the 200 guests they have invited. Last in the series. (R)
8.00 The Crystal Maze. Richard Ayode guides a team who met on jury service through the four zones of the Maze, tackling a range of skill, mystery, physical and mental challenges.
9.00 Homeland. Carrie is forced to choose a side, Keane needs an ally and Saul comes up with an idea. Espionage drama, starring Claire Danes.
10.15 Googlebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.10 FILM: Easy A (2010). Misfit teenager Olive lies about her non-existent sexual history, and uses the resulting rumours to become the talk of the school. Teen comedy, starring Emma Stone and Penn Badgley.
12.50 FILM: Kahaani 2 (2016). Premiere. A police inspector investigates the case of a woman in a coma, but finds she may not be who she seems to be. Crime thriller, starring Vidya Balan and Arjun Rampal.
3.00 KOTV Boxing Weekly. Gamal Yafai v Gavin McDonnell.
3.25 Mobil 1: The Grid. Including a look back at last year's Azerbaijan F1 Grand Prix. (R)
3.50 Come Dine Champion of Champions. A plumber, a lettings agent and a local communications officer battle it out. (R)
4.45 Building the Dream. Revisiting a couple who built a three-bedroom home in East Sussex. (R)
5.40 Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

Channel 5

- 6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess 6.10 Wissper 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.30 Milkshake! Monkey 6.35 The Secret Life of Puppies 6.40 Mofy 6.45 Simon 6.50 Simon 6.55 Peppa Pig 7.05 Paw Patrol 7.15 Thomas & Friends 7.25 Fireman Sam 7.35 Olly the Little White Van 7.45 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.05 Paw Patrol 8.25 Nella the Princess Knight 8.40 Noddy: Toyland Detective 8.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.10 Shimmer and Shine 9.20 Digby Dragon 9.35 Peppa Pig 9.45 Peppa Pig**
9.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. A flashback episode exploring Splinter's origins. (R)
10.30 Football on 5: The Championship. Highlights of Bolton Wanderers v Wolverhampton Wanderers. (R)
11.30 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Highlights of AFC Wimbledon v Oldham Athletic. (R)
12.00 Britain's Greatest Bridges. How the Clifton Suspension Bridge was built. (R)
12.15 Police Interceptors. The team discovers the hideout of a gang of burglars. (R)
1.15 Police Interceptors. Officers follow a stolen BMW fitted with a tracking device. (R)
2.15 FILM: Dances with Wolves (1990). Oscar-winning Western, starring Kevin Costner.
5.45 FILM: Pearl Harbor (2001). Romantic Second World War drama, with Ben Affleck and Kate Beckinsale.
6.45 5 News Update.
6.50 FILM: Pearl Harbor (2001). Concluded.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Diana to Meghan: Royal Wedding Secrets. A behind the scenes look at how previous royal weddings were organised. Kiri Te Kanawa shares her memories of performing at the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.
10.00 FILM: The Big Wedding (2013). Premiere. A divorced couple attend their adopted son's wedding, and pretend to still be married to avoid shocking his birth mother. Comedy, with Robert De Niro and Diane Keaton.
11.00 5 News Update.
11.05 FILM: The Big Wedding (2013). Concluded.
11.40 Brides Make You Laugh Out Loud. Iain Lee narrates a collection of internet videos featuring weddings. (R)
12.30 Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong. (R)
1.00 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
3.10 The Body in the Freezer: Countdown to Murder. The events leading up to the death of Rebecca Thorpe in March 2010. (R)
4.00 Tattoo Disasters UK. People who regret their tattoos share the stories behind them. (R)
4.25 Tattoo Disasters UK. A taxi driver wants her space tattoo removed. (R)
4.45 House Doctor. A cottage in Quorn, Leicestershire. (R)
5.10 Wildlife SOS. The work of an animal sanctuary. (R)
5.35 House Doctor. A slightly neglected 200-year-old cottage. (R)

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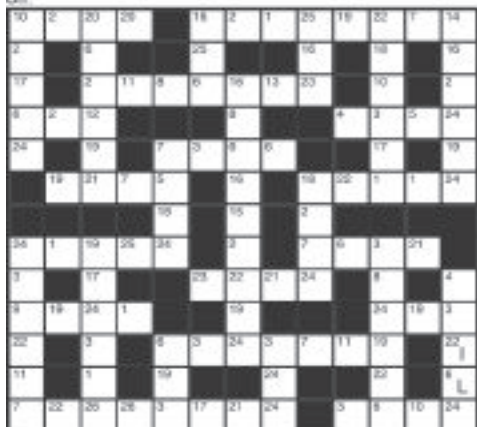
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BRAIN GYM

No.468

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
M	Y	D	I	C	J	G	A	T	H	P	Z	V
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
O	Q	X	U	F	W	K	E	L	B	S	N	R

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

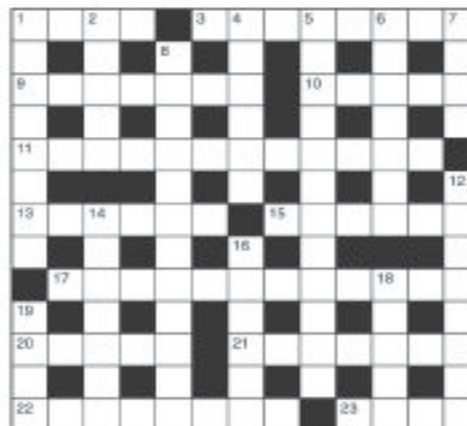
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Fail to get a sprayer (4)
3. The cards I can beat are a disadvantage (8)
9. Tolls of bishops losing prominent leader (7)
10. The colour of whitebeam berries (5)
11. Although inexperienced with digits, they're useful in the nursery (5,7)
13. Letter offering plenty of lip (6)
15. Figure of subtle construction (6)
17. Girl all at sea for the first time? (11,6)
20. Put ring on arm or leg to show condition of neglect (5)
21. Uneasy with the others I have (7)
22. Offered to look after Eastern Communist (8)
23. Forsook political wing (4)

Down

1. Spoil one gift flower (6)
2. Loves to find the answer (5)
4. Attack because to put to sea (6)
5. Dose given to animal to make it a puller of heavy loads (7,5)
6. A bar, etc. for entertainment (7)
7. Left harbour (4)
8. Shrub trained in free form went up in quality (8,4)
12. Tear about always showing great respect (8)
14. Aolen been affected water transport operator (7)
16. Half-open plant supplies part of meal (6)
18. A team apart (5)
19. Uninteresting place to live (4)



Quick Clues:

Across

1. Jealousy (4)
3. Rubbing (8)
9. Like fungus (7)
11. Tangle (12)
13. Ascends (6)
15. Squirm (6)
17. Esteem (12)
20. Concerning (5)
21. Unrevol (7)
22. Constantly (8)
23. Colours (4)

Down

1. Effectiveness (8)
2. Poison (5)
4. Losses (6)
5. Opposite numbers (12)
6. Briefly (2,5)
7. Observation (4)
8. Worked together (12)
12. Enthusiasm (8)
14. Ameliorate (7)
16. Existing (6)
18. Very coldly (5)
19. Overtake (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Mistle; 7 Spent; 9 Actor; 10 Resisted; 12 Stand to gain; 14 Legal fiction; 16 Besiege; 19 Adams; 21 Paint; 22 Belting. Down: 1 Child; 2 Almost; 3 Act; 4 Spring; 5 Inhabit; 8 Reader; 11 Enlarge; 13 Sewing; 15 Align; 16 Oddity; 17 Crony; 20 Set. QUICK - Across: 6 Furlong; 7 Vase; 9 Prince; 10 Course; 12 Exposed; 14 Edgewood; 16 Flowing; 18 Spate; 21 Fiery; 22 Deficit. Down: 1 Lorry; 2 Clinic; 3 Orb; 4 Signal; 5 Memento; 8 Cottage; 11 Convent; 13 Explain; 15 Reward; 16 Napkin; 17 Adie; 20 Few.

Quiz

1. Who was born Maria Eva Duarte?
2. Of which bird is the European redwing a variety?
3. Tornado Alley lies between which two US mountain ranges?
4. How many cards are there in a tarot deck?
5. In which US state are the towns Norman and Enid?
6. Which London attraction has its own police force?
7. In which mythology was Marduk the creator of Earth and humans?
8. Which sea bird is also called the solar goose?
9. What is the study of crops and soils called?
10. In which country was Alcoholics Anonymous set up in 1934?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Lobster; 2 Franz Liszt; 3 Kookaburra; 4 Alvin; 5 Peter Sellers; 6 Portofino; 7 Seaweed; 8 A lizard; 9 Table tennis; 10 Walter Mitty.

Niner: DRUMSTICK

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3213476
578671
986219

gives a fabric,
gives a cloth,
gives a fur.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Some of Britain's greatest statesmen have been drawn from the House of Lords

Sounding the death knell on a tradition?

If a Shropshire peer gets his way, the days of hereditary lords voting in parliament could very soon be numbered. MARK ANDREWS reports.

The Earl of Derby and Earl Grey, whose reforms finally gave ordinary people the vote. The Duke of Wellington, who opened the door to Catholics standing for parliament.

For seven centuries, some of Britain's greatest statesmen have been drawn from the House of Lords, having assumed their roles by means of hereditary peerage.

But if a Shropshire peer gets his way, the days of hereditary lords voting on parliamentary matters could very soon be numbered.

Baron Grocott, who as plain Bruce Grocott served as MP for The Wrekin and finally Telford, has tabled a Bill which could effectively sound the death knell for hereditary peers voting in the House of Lords.

Lord Grocott's House of Lords (Hereditary Peers Abolition of Voting Rights) Bill sounds as arcane as they come. And in a news agenda dominated by Brexit and the stand-off with Russia over the Sergei Skripal affair, it is hardly un-

surprising it has struggled to attract much media attention. But if successful, the Bill will have a profound impact on the way Britain is governed.

Prior to 1999, hereditary peers made up the majority of members of the House of Lords. But in 1999 Tony Blair's government acted to strip all but 92 hereditary peers of their voting rights. Instead, hereditary lords were invited to elect 92 members from their number to represent them in the lords, meaning that for the first time they were comfortably outvoted by life peers who are largely appointed by political leaders. The 1999 reforms were opposed by the Conservative leader of the time, William Hague – ironically now a life peer – who accused Mr Blair of creating a "House of Cronies".

Lord Grocott's proposal, however, takes this a step further and will eventually end the 700-year tradition of hereditary peers voting in Parliament. At the moment, if a hereditary peer dies, retires, or leaves the House, a by-election is held to elect another hereditary peer in their place. Lord Grocott proposes doing away with the by-elections, and not replacing the peers.

He cites the by-election to replace the Liberal Democrat peer Lord Avebury, following his death in 2016, as an example of why the process is outdated.

"We have had elections where there have been seven candidates, and only three people attended to vote," he says.

"My feeling is the overwhelming majority in this house, including the majority of hereditary peers, support this."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, his proposals have the backing of the Electoral Reform Society, which calls for the Lords to be scrapped in its entirety.

The society's senior director Willie Sullivan, does not mince his words: "The House of Lords

in its entirety is an affront to democracy, with the public currently having no say over who fills its famous red benches," he says. "Continued presence of hereditary peers is frankly beyond the pale. All but one of them are men who owe their peerage to the family into which they were born, rather than to a truly democratic vote."

Lord Grocott accuses a small number of peers of attempting to wreck the Bill by wasting time with numerous amendments. A recent debate was adjourned after once more running out of parliamentary time.

However, one of the bill's most outspoken critics, Lord Caithness of Clashfern argues that it contradicts the Burns Report on reform to the Lords, which was published last year.

Lord Burns, a cross-bench life peer and retired civil servant, recommended reducing the number of peers from 600 to 800, introducing 15-year maximum terms, and ensuring the political composition reflects the result of the most recent general election. But crucially he said the existing arrangement of retaining 92 life peers should be retained.

Lord Trethgarne and Lord Caithness have argued that it would wrong to propose further reform until Lord Burns' recommendations have been implemented in full.

Lord Cormack, the former South Staffordshire MP, points out that life peers – of whom he is one – are not a result of the democratic process either.

"Life peers are appointed by the whim of our party leaders," he says.

"That doesn't seem a very subjective basis to decide who should be put in this house, how well you get on with the leader of your party."

Feelings are high on both sides of the debate. We must wait and see whether time is up for hereditary peers in our parliamentary system.

"The continued presence of hereditary peers is beyond the pale"

Castle to call your own is no flight of fancy



Dick Strawbridge and Angel Adoree, who own Chateau-de-la-Motte Husson

LIVING in a castle may seem like a fairytale dream but the idea of owning a château in France isn't actually as far-fetched as you might imagine.

And if you've been watching Dick Strawbridge's *Escape to the Chateau* on Channel 4, you may already be pondering starting a new life in the picturesque Loire Valley.

It was three years ago that Scrapheap Challenge star Dick and his wife Angel Adoree swapped their two-bed flat in Southend for an abandoned château and set about restoring it to its former 19th-century glory.

Audiences have been captivated by their adventures as they bring Chateau-de-la-Motte Husson back to life with the fourth series of the popular show now airing on Sunday nights.



Renovation project, Normandy – £437,926

And if you have been inspired by Dick and Angel's life-changing experience you too could follow in their footsteps and all for less money than you might think.

The variety of styles, sizes and conditions on the market means that there are châteaux available to suit a surprising range of budgets.

Whether you want a renovation project which will allow you to put your own stamp on a property or you want all of the hard work already done for you there are plenty of castles out there for under £500,000.

For around £233,767, you can buy a castle, that dates back in part to the 15th century, in the Limousin which will require some work to make it comfortable. It used to be owned by the local priest and is surrounded by 5.86 hectares of land.

In need of light restoration is a château in Brittany which is on the market for £297,529. Inside there are historical features including marble fireplaces, original oak parquet flooring and roll top enamel bath while the grounds include walled gar-

By Heather Large

den, stables and a hunting lodge.

If, like Dick, you fancy a larger challenge and a complete blank canvas to work with you could choose a castle perched on a hill overlooking the rolling countryside in Gironde. It will cost £394,718 but the inside needs a complete overhaul so it probably a long-term project for the more adventurous.

While a 16-bed Normandy château in Calvados, which is on the site of a medieval monastery and in need of extensive renovation can be yours for £437,926.

But if you want to be able to move straight in surrounded by all of life's modern comforts then a castle in Auvergne with eight bedrooms, five bathrooms a swimming pool, walled garden and views over the countryside will set you back just £289,460.

Another option is a charming castle in a picturesque village in Poitou Charentes priced at £390,332.

It boasts medieval and Renaissance features as well as six bedrooms, three bathrooms and a swimming pool. For those of you with a bigger budget, you could opt for an elegant château in Vendée, Loire which is on the market for around £768,729 with property company FrenchEntree.

Property services manager Fleur Buckley said more and more Brits are leaving to start a new life in France and setting their sights on their dream castles.

"Châteaux are always some of the most popular properties with our clients. They often make fantastic settings for luxury accommodation, restaurants and wedding venues, while ample grounds open the possibility of running equestrian schools, hunting and fishing activities and plenty more."

"Working orchards, olive groves and vineyards can also provide business angles for those keen to work the land as part of their fairytale dream," she added.

The process of buying property in France is said to be fairly straightforward. French estate agents must hold a 'carte professionnelle', which you can ask to see to ensure everything is above board.

If you need finance to purchase your French property, it's best to get a mortgage agreed in principle before you start viewing.

Another important thing to know is that surveys are not commonplace in France.

A notaire must be used when a property or land is sold. They are similar to a British lawyer, but they are employed by the French government to ensure a sale is above board and that all taxes are paid.

It's also recommended that a buyer gets advice over inheritance because France has a forced succession system, unlike the UK. A solicitor will be able to advise.



Lord Grocott has tabled a Bill calling for reform

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15 years of best-selling VW Touran is being celebrated

A little over 15 years ago – in March 2003 – Volkswagen launched the first Touran on the market.

Since then, over three model generations, the MPV has developed into a best-selling vehicle and a market leader in its segment in Europe. Over the past 15 years, around 2.3 million new car buyers have chosen the MPV, which is offered as a five- or seven-seater. Today's Touran can impress with intelligent flexibility, a family-friendly character and innovative features, especially in driver assistance and infotainment.

After its launch in 2003, the MPV was given a comprehensive facelift in November 2006 including the first semi-automatic assistance system (Park Assist). In 2010, Volkswagen adapted the Touran – whose sales had already reached 1.13 million units – to the brand's new design DNA and updated its technologies.

After delivering a total of 1.9 million units, Volkswagen developed a completely new generation of the Touran and introduced it in a world premiere in February 2015. This was the first time that the Touran was based on the new 'modular transverse matrix' (MQB), and it was now 130 mm longer and up to 62 kilograms lighter. An entire armada of progressive assistance systems made their way into the compact Volkswagen MPV, as did a new level of connectivity. These



An ideal choice as one of the best thought-out family cars of its time

included the optional 'Car-Net Cam Connect', which parents could use to keep an eye on their children via camera and see on the infotainment system monitor whether everything was all right in the rear seating area. The Touran offers another sensible option: electronic voice amplification. It amplifies passengers' voices via a microphone, and their speech is output over the vehicle's loudspeakers. This can assure good

listening comprehension even across three rows of seats.

The current generation also stands out with one of the largest luggage compartments in its class (up to 834 litres with five people on-board), an ISOFIX child seat system for the rear seats and a 3-zone automatic air conditioner (Climatronic). So, the Touran is also an ideal choice today as one of the best thought-out family cars of its time.

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2011 Citroen C3 1.4 i 8v VTR+ 80000 mls (P) Grey	£3,900	
Fiat		
2013 500 1.2 Colour Therapy 16000 mls (P) Grey	£6,000	
2014 500 1.2 Sport 3dr 32268 mls (P) Black	£6,490	
Ford		
2013 Fiesta 1.0 EcoBoost Zetec (s/s) 23885 mls (P) Blue	£7,500	
2014 Fiesta 1.0 EcoBoost Zetec S (s/stop) 29124 mls (P) Red	£8,700	
2011 Focus 1.6 TDCi Zetec 63000 mls (D) Silver	£6,400	
2012 Focus 1.6 Ti-VCT Zetec 86281 mls (P) Silver	£5,800	
Honda		
2015 Civic 1.8 i-VTEC SR Hatchback 19508 mls (P) Red	£11,490	
2015 Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES Plus CVT 7408 mls (P) Silver	£10,690	
Hyundai		
2016 i20 1.0 T-GDI Sport Nav (ISG, s/stop) 9583 mls (P) Orange	£10,000	
2015 i20 1.4 CRDI Premium 22879 mls (D) Grey	£8,490	
2012 ix35 2.0 CRDI 16v Premium SUV 4WD 39102 mls (D) Silver	£10,500	
Kia		
2016 Picanto 1.0 i 9664 mls (P) Black	£6,990	
2015 Picanto 1.25 2 22097 mls (P) Pink	£7,500	
2017 Rio 1.25 SE 5dr (ISG) 3711 mls (P) Red	£10,000	
2012 Venga 1.4 i EcoDynamics 16v 1 74000 mls (P) Red	£4,600	
Mazda		
2014 Mazda2 1.3 Sport Colour Edition 31000 mls (P) White	£7,000	
2016 Mazda2 1.5 Sport Black (s/s) 23330 mls (P) White	£10,690	
2015 MX-5 1.8 Sport Venture Roadster 2dr 15896 mls (P) Blue	£13,500	
Mercedes-Benz		
2012 C220 CDI BlueEFF AMG Sport Coupe7G 52827 mls (D) Black	£12,500	
MG		
2017 GS 1.5 TGI Excite (s/s) 2000 mls (P) Black	£17,590	
2017 MG3 1.5 VTI-Tech 3Style (start/stop) 5000 mls (P) Yellow	£9,000	
2017 ZS 1.5 VTI-Tech Excite SUV 5dr 6000 mls (P) Blue	£13,490	
MINI		
2012 Countryman 2.0 Cooper SD ALL4 55222 mls (D) Silver	£10,000	
2015 Hatch 1.2 One (Media XL) (s/s) 23000 mls (P) White	£10,000	
Nissan		
2015 Juke 1.5 dCi Acenta Premium (s/s) 30000 mls (D) Red	£9,000	
2013 Juke 1.5 dCi Acenta Premium 19188 mls (D) Red	£8,990	
2015 Pulsar 1.2 DIG-T Acenta (s/s) 16238 mls (P) Black	£8,800	
2012 Qashqai 1.6 N-TEC+ 2WD 38000 mls (P) Silver	£10,000	

Peugeot		
2013 208 1.2 VTI Access+ 34000 mls (P) Blue	£5,700	
2015 208 1.2 VTI PureTech Style 23652 mls (P) Grey	£7,490	
2014 308 1.6 e-HDi Feline (s/s) 5dr 59000 mls (D) Red	£8,300	
Renault		
2014 Clio 1.2 16v Dynamique MediaNav 33290 mls (P) Grey	£7,800	
2014 Scenic 1.5 TD Dynamique EDC Auto (Tom Tom) 56833 mls (D) Red	£8,790	
2016 SEAT Ibiza 1.0 SOL SportCoupe 14500 mls (P) Black	£7,720	
Subaru		
2018 Forester 2.0 XE Premium Lineartronic 4x4 1000 mls (P) White	£31,495	
2018 Impreza 1.6 i SE Lineartronic AWD (s/s) 1000 mls (P) Red	£24,545	
2018 Subaru Outback 2.5 i SE Premium Lineartronic 4x4 1000 mls (P) Blue	£33,545	
2018 Subaru XV 2.0 i SE Lineartronic AWD (s/s) 5dr 1000 mls (P) Silver	£27,045	

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Ford Fiesta Titanium 1.0 EcoBoost 100PS 5-Door: urban 52.3 (5.4), extra urban 78.5 (3.6), combined 65.7 (4.3). Official CO₂ emission 97g/km. The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda3 range: Urban 37.7 (7.5) - 65.7 (4.3), Extra Urban 58.9 (4.8) - 80.7 (3.5). Combined 48.7 (5.8) - 74.3 (3.8). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 135 - 99.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing. These are provided for comparability purposes only and may not reflect your actual driving results.

Retail sales only, subject to availability for vehicles registered between 01.04.18 and 30.06.18 at participating dealers. T&C apply. *3.9% APR Mazda Personal Contract Purchase available on all new Mazda models. ^£1,500 Mazda3 120ps Sport Black. Finance subject to status. 18s or over. Guarantee may be required. Mazda Financial Services RH1 1SR. Model shown: Mazda3 120ps Sport Nav, OTR from £21,295. Model shown features optional Soul Red Metallic paint (£670). OTR price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, first registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. *Test drives subject to applicant status and availability. Details correct at time of going to print. Not available in conjunction with any other offer unless specified.

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First Morgan Aero GT rolls off Malvern production line

At the Geneva Motor Show last month, the Morgan Motor Company revealed its most extreme road-going model to date, the Aero GT – and the first edition has now rolled off the production line.

Morgan Motor Company will produce just eight of the special Aero GT variants – all vehicles individually built bespoke to customer specification. The Aero GT represents the end of Aero 8 production, guaranteeing that every Aero 8 owner will be the custodian of a very significant piece of Morgan history.

Powered by the same 367bhp BMW N62 V8 engine used in the Aero 8, the Aero GT will travel from 0-62mph in 4.5 seconds, reaching a top speed of 170mph. Each Aero GT will be built with Morgan's latest adjustable suspension and come with manual transmission.

Each customer will have an individual design consultancy with Jon Wells, Morgan's Head of Design, before the car enters production. This, the first customer car to be completed, is finished in Miami Blue, which perfectly complements the aggressive body styling unique to the Aero GT.

The striking body panels of the Aero GT have been sculpted in such a way to ensure that tension and elegance is expressed in each line. All surfacing of the new panels was proven digitally via Computation



The car is powered by the 367bhp BMW N62 V8 engine used in the Aero 8

Fluid Dynamics simulation prior to full scale validation. Each panel is created using the technologically advanced Superforming process synonymous with modern Morgans, before being hand-finished and transformed into Aero GT panels.

The front canopy details and wing top louvre vents are proven to reduce low pressure on the sides of the Aero body, making a notable difference in frontal downforce. At the rear, the dramatic diffuser reduces air pressure from beneath the vehicle, increasing rear downforce and reducing the visual weight of the rear-end.

Finite enamelled 'GT' badges signify

the model variant. Each is individually hand made by a British Jeweller.

The interior is hand-finished with a series of painted stitching and pinstripe accents, and an extended choice of wood options.

Steve Morris, managing director said: "Every Morgan is built to an exacting specification and is bespoke to each customer and the first Aero GT off the production line looks superb in every way. It was a pleasure to reveal the car to the world just a few weeks ago, to see the first car leave the factory is an honour and I know the new owner will be delighted when they take delivery."

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11	PEUGEOT PARTNER, White, SLD.....	£4,575
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English Rugby Clubs

Midlands Premier						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Birmingham & Solihull	24	22	0	2	980	310108
Peterborough Lions	25	20	0	5	856	488 97
Newport (Salop)	24	18	0	6	944	434 92
Southnorpe	25	18	1	6	698	492 87
Scunthorpe	25	15	0	10	720	468 77
Sandbach	25	14	0	11	727	584 71
Doncaster Phoenix	25	13	0	12	812	728 71
Derby	25	11	0	14	665	683 64
Nuneaton	25	11	1	13	661	616 62
Bourneville	25	10	0	15	678	832 55
Lichfield	25	7	0	18	535	773 47
Newbold on Avon	25	7	0	18	480	746 38
Longton	25	6	0	19	492	959 38
Old Halesonians	25	1	0	24	274	147810

Midlands 1 West						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Burton	24	22	0	2	1082	287111
Dudley Kingswinford	23	20	0	3	833	367101
Bromsgrove	25	19	0	6	831	473 96
Stoke on Trent	24	13	2	9	572	545 67
Lutterworth	25	13	0	10	576	564 67
Hereford	25	13	1	11	536	526 65
Mossley Oak	23	11	1	11	467	527 56
Stourbridge Lions	25	10	1	14	525	701 56
Worcester	24	9	2	13	442	636 48
Rugby Lions	25	8	2	15	525	658 47
Sutton Coldfield	25	8	1	16	505	714 45
Melbourne	24	7	2	15	427	587 41
Camp Hill	25	6	0	19	447	749 37
Wolverhampton	23	3	2	18	387	811 26

Midlands 2 West (North)						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Whitchurch	20	20	0	0	677	228 94
Crewe & Nantwich	21	16	0	5	654	379 76
Spartans (Midlands)	21	15	0	6	420	296 66
Leek	20	13	1	6	424	301 65
Ludlow	21	11	1	9	462	401 58
Walsall	21	10	1	10	438	485 53
Veseyans	21	10	1	10	372	434 53
Tamworth	21	9	0	12	374	547 43
Kidderminster	21	6	0	15	407	551 34
Newcastle (Staffs)	21	6	0	15	343	434 33
Old Salterians	21	3	0	18	320	510 39
Clebury Mortimer	21	4	0	17	236	590 18

Midlands 3 West (North)						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Telford Hornets	21	17	0	4	452	178 83
Stafford	21	17	0	10	374	465 82
Burntwood	21	16	1	4	604	281 82
Shrewsbury	20	13	1	6	488	301 67
Harborne	21	13	0	8	412	355 63
Canmore	21	11	1	9	438	447 57
Uttewater	21	8	0	13	543	503 44
Edwardians	21	7	0	8	227	295 33
Handsforth	21	8	0	13	593	590 40
Trenham	21	5	0	16	364	651 30
Willenhall	21	3	0	18	308	602 18
Barton-Under-Needwood	21	2	0	19	181	811 11

Midland 4 West (North)						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Eccleshall	15	13	0	2	517	216 63
Wedsnesbury	16	12	0	4	391	173 58
Clee Hill	15	8	0	7	276	238 40
Rugeley	15	8	0	7	263	291 40
St Leonards	15	7	0	8	227	295 33
Aston Old Edwardians	16	6	1	9	285	392 31
Bloxwich	15	4	1	10	286	407 20
Exington	16	3	2	11	236	424 20
Yardley & District	15	6	0	9	225	270 16

Midlands 5 West (North)						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Greyhound	13	12	0	1	433	221 58
Linley	13	9	1	3	418	202 49
Bishops Castle & Onny Valley	13	9	0	4	341	185 48
Chaddestrey Corbett	13	6	0	7	423	335 37
St Leonards	13	7	1	5	231	289 36
Gnosall	13	3	0	10	240	410 18
Warley	13	3	0	10	196	425 13
Stourport	13	2	0	11	140	306 6

Evo-Stik League						
Division One South						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Basford United	38	28	7	3	90	33 91
Alvechurch	37	22	6	5	66	42 75
Freckley Athletic	37	22	6	9	101	57 69
Bedworth United	38	21	6	11	67	52 69
Stamford	38	17	14	8	58	61 46
Chaseston	38	20	5	13	73	61 65
Leek Town	39	17	8	14	74	49 59
Corby Town	40	18	5	17	70	69 59
Lincoln United	38	18	5	15	76	76 59
Stratford Park Steels	37	12	13	12	68	56 49
Cleethorpe Town	34	16	10	8	67	46 46
Spalding United	37	13	7	16	61	46 46
Peterborough Sports	38	13	6	19	64	71 45
Belper Town	39	12	9	18	45	78 45
Loughborough Dynamo	39	12	8	19	56	74 44
Sheffield	38	9	13	16	59	81 40
Carlton Town	35	10	9	16	60	80 39
Stokeport Athletic	38	9	8	20	61	80 39
Newcastle Town	39	9	8	22	47	72 35
Gresley	35	9	8	18	39	67 35
Market Drayton Town	36	8	8	20	37	79 32
Romulus	40	7	10	23	53	92 31

Hallmark Security League						
First Division						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Silsden AFC	36	29	3	4	95	32 90
Litherland REMYCA	36	28	4	4	102	31 88
Prestwich Heys	34	24	3	7	100	41 75
Whitchurch Alport	35	24	3	8	79	32 75
Sandbach United	34	20	3	11	69	50 63
Alsager Town	34	18	7	9	74	57 61
Cammell Laird 1907	35	18	5	12	73	52 59
AFK Blackpool	35	16	5	14	67	62 53
Holker Old Boys	34	15	6	13	56	73 51
Stokeport Town	33	14	4	15	59	72 46
New Mills	33	14	4	15	59	72 46
Carlisle City	34	13	5	16	57	55 44
Abbey Hulton United	34	12	8	14	46	52 44
FC Oswestry Town	34	11	5	18	56	71 38
Cheadle Town	33	10	8	15	51	66 38
Atherton LR	35	11	4	20	51	70 37
Elkeshall	34	9	16	9	88	33 46
Chadderton	35	8	8	19	61	81 32
St Helens Town	38	5	25	50	91	29
Bacup Borough	38	4	8	14	45	70 28
Daisy Hill	34	6	7	21	37	83 25
Nelson	35	5	8	22	41	78 23



Midland Football League

Premier Division						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Bromsgrove Sporting	39	29	5	5	102	44 92
Colehill Town	37	23	8	6	89	45 77
Highgate United	35	24	5	6	69	36 77
Worcester City	37	21	10	6	82	38 73
Spelling Khalsa	36	18	9	9	71	46 63
Rugby Town	38	16	7	15	64	52 55
Westfields	38	16	7	13	73	62 55
Coventry Sphinx	36	15	10	11	69	58 55
Coventry United	31	16	4	11	66	48 52
Long Eaton United	38	15	7	16	57	81 52
Quorn	36	15	5	16	61	76 50
Hearon Town	32	14	7	11	50	51 49
South Normanton Athletic	35	8	6	21	46	77 30
Boldmere St Michaels	37	12	8	17	52	70 44
Lye Town	39	12	8	19	54	73 44
AFK Wulfrunians	38	13	4	21	44	79 43
Stourport Swifts	30	10	6	14	48	63 36
Loughborough University	35	10	6	19	49	66 36
Leicester Road	34	13	7	8	40	44 75
Shawbury United	34	7	7	20	45	61 28
Haughmond	36	6	8	22	43	75 26
Rocaster	33	3	6	24	53	94 15

Division 1						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Walsall Wood	35	30	2	3	136	25 92
Ikeston Town	37	27	4	6	95	37 75
Leicester Road	38	23	6	7	80	44 75
Hinckley AFC	32	25	6	6	118	56 71
Atherstone Town	34	22	5	7	102	44 71
Racing Club Warwick	34	20	6	8	82	49 66
Heather St Johns	37	20	5	12	113	77 55
Page Rangers	39	16	7	16	79	77 55
Lichfield City	38	16	6	14	78	77 54
Sturley	32	16	1	15	52	55 51
Littleton	32	16	1	15	59	40 49
Coventry Copsewood	34	14	3	17	50	71 45
Walton Town	35	12	6	17	69	90 40
Pershore Town	39	11	8	20	58	85 41
Shawbury Griffl	38	10	8	20	49	83 38
Heath Hayes	34	9	10	15	77	83 37
Chelmsley Town	36	10	7	19	47	81 37
Cadbury Athletic	38	8	10	15	48	65 34
Brocton	37	8	9	20	55	80 33
Stokeport Town	37	7	2	28	44	93 23
Bolshai Swifts	34	6	4	24	28	99 22
Coventry Avis	34	4	4	26	21	130 16

West Midlands (Regional) League

Premier Division						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
W'ron Sporting Community	30	26	2	2	120	22 80
Black Country Rangers	34	21	8	5	97	49 71
Malvern Town	32	22	5	6	96	54 74
Trivickle	28	20	5	3	86	35 65
Wednesfield	32	20	5	7	86	53 65
Bury Town	33	18	6	9	83	52 60
Elsmere Rangers	31	18	4	9	79	51 58
Chadwell Town	31	16	4	15	65	48 52
Wellington	32	16	3	13	70	61 51
W'ron Casuals	33	15	3	15	104	78 48
Bilston Town Community	35	14	4	17	72	81 46
Hereford Lads Club	30	14	3	13	62	67 43
Smethwick	30	9	3	18	39	66 30
Shifnal Town	33	9	3	21	50	96 30
Old Wulfrunians	28	8	3	15	41	57 27
Stone Old Alleynians	30	8	2	20	51	81 26
AFK Bridgnorth	33	7	5	21	42	80 26
Pegasus Juniors	33	6	7	20	33	83 25
Dudley Sports	31	6	3	22	40	92 21
Wellington Amateurs	31	2	7	22	29	120 13

Division 1						
	P	W	D	L	F	A P
Wern Town.....	29	21	3	5	91	32 66
Gornal Athletic.....	27	16	4	8	67	43 54
Newport Town.....	27	17	6	5	85	34 55
St Martins.....	27	17	0	10	70	41 51
Darlaston Town (1874).....	29	15	6	8	72	59 51
Team Dudley.....	29	15	5	9	83	59 50
Old Wulfrunians.....	25	14	7	4	59	20 48
Worcester Raiders.....	27	13	7	7	38	53 46
Tipton Town.....	28	11	3	14	54	30 36
Stourbridge.....	27	11	2	14	55	67 35
Bromyard Town.....	25	10	2	13	33	33 36
Wrens Nest.....	25	10	2	13	42	32 33
Aliscot.....	26	8	3	15	41	57 27
Telford Juniors.....	27	7	2	18	43	75 23
Kingston Town.....	26	6	2	18	38	66 20
Wydney.....	27	3	5	19	28	77 14
Whitwell Town.....	23	2	5	16	25	79 11

Olympian Massimo bags two silvers



Oswestry's Massimo Wyatt who won two silver medals

MASSIMO Wyatt came home two silver medals from the Telford Athletics Club spring warm-up where he and fellow Oswestry Olympians Mia Wyatt and Ben Rothera began their preparations for the new Track and Field season.

Competing in the under-13 category, Massimo jumped just two centimetres sort of his personal best to secure second place in the long jump, and then claimed another silver medal on the track in the 800 metres.

Despite unhelpful conditions, the versatile Ben Rothera also delivered promising performances in the long jump and 800 metres.

Stepping up to the under-15 category this season, Mia Wyatt maintained her recent progress with a time close to her personal best in the 800 metres.

Oswestry Olympians Juniors' first competition of the season will be the Shropshire Young Athletes League fixture at Telford on Thursday, April 26.

Crosses net a high-five win to boost hopes

PROMOTION-CHASING Four Crosses kept up the pressure in the Montgomeryshire League division one after securing a 5-3 victory away to Trewern.

Victory kept the Foxen Manor side four points off the pace, with Jamie Evans netting three of the goals, along with Gareth Jones and Harry Davies.

Forden United are looking good for promotion from division two after getting back to winning ways by trouncing Llanfyllin Town reserves 9-1.

Christian Webster led the way with four of the goals, while Josh Gethin, Mike Henderson-Smith, Charlie Edwards, Ryan Sutton and Tom Anderson also found the net.

Waterloo Rovers were also in the goals as they swept aside Kerry reserves 11-0 to progress in the Boys & Boden League Cup.

Tom Ellis and Charlie Proctor both bagged hat-tricks, with Luke Evans, Will Pritchard, Ryan Ellis, Rob Jones and Nathan James the other marksmen.

Llanfair United reserves kept their flag flying with 6-5 penalty shootout victory against title chasing Bishop's Castle after the sides had finished 2-2.

Results

Division one: Gulsfield res v Caersws res (postponed), Trewern 3 Four Crosses 5.

Division two: Abernule res 0 Newtown Wanderers 5, Carno res v Churchstoke res (postponed), Forden United 3 Llanfyllin Town res 1, Llangedwyn v Llanfhaeadr res (postponed), Welshpool res 2 Llanfechain 2.

Boys & Boden League Cup round three: Bishop's Castle 2 Llanfair Utd res 2 (Llanfair win 6-5 on penalties), Llanyrnnech 0 Maesyrhandir 3, Waterloo Rovers 11 Kerry res 0.

Second half show costly for Eagles

OSWESTRY slipped to a disappointing 42-10 loss at mid-table rivals Congleton in the South Lancs and Cheshire Two following a second half demise.

After suffering a dramatic last-gasp defeat in the first meeting between the sides at Granville Park earlier in the season, the Eagles were looking to turn the tables on their hosts.

They were in the game at half time, but their challenge faded after the break as the Cheshire hosts ran out convincing winners with a total of six touch-downs, including a quickfire hat-trick from captain Greg Wood.

The opening exchanges were physical was both sides playing direct rugby, before Congleton took the lead when centre Ed Williams stormed over following from a turnover on half way, Joe Kanauros converting.

That advantage was doubled when fly half Kanauros broke through the line, and picked out supporting hooker Kallan Keenan to cross the whitewash. Kanauros again added the extras.

Oswestry battled on and were certainly intending on crashing the Congleton's family fun day which was being held at the club.

They reduced the arrears when, after a spilled ball by their Cheshire hosts, they shipped it wide for centre Luca Owen-Youens to break through just before the half time whistle. Louis MacKenzie converted to add to his earlier penalty.

Trailing 14-10 at the break, Oswestry were in the hunt, but the home side took charge of the second period with captain Greg Wood breaking through for a converted touchdown.

No8 Wood then drove over from a five metre

scrum, the try again converted, before the same player completed his hat-trick in the space of 12 minutes as Kanauros gathered his own chip kick before releasing the forward to score under the posts.

Congleton completed the scoring with a final try through flanker Jake Lea after some fantastic offloads in the loose, Kanauros again supplying the kick.

With four games remaining, and lying 10th in the league, the Eagles will look to bounce back at home to another mid-table side Dukinfield on Saturday (3pm) before entertaining lowly Oldershaw the week after.

OSWESTRY II went down 43-29 at home to promotion chasing Moore in the North West League division four (south). They are away to third placed Knutsford on Saturday.

COBRA strike for hat-trick of wins

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

FULL-BACK Richard Jones led the charge as COBRA made it three wins on the bounce in rugby's Welsh League division two (north) with a 55-10 victory over struggling Abergele

Having defeated their lowly opponents away a few weeks back, the Meifod men duly completed a comfortable double in which they ran in nine tries, five of which were converted.

Jones starred with four of the touchdowns, with No8 Jack Jukes collecting a hat-trick while centre Richard Roberts and wing Jonathan Lewis also went over. With Will Worthington missing the game through injury, Matthew Jones kicked five conversions.

Revering in the warmer conditions, COBRA had a bonus point sewn up by half time when they led 43-3, but Abergele battled hard after the break to restrict the hosts to 12 points while crossing for a converted try themselves.

The Llanfair side will look to finish their campaign on a strong note and still have an outside chance of promotion, although they will probably need to win their last four league games.

They are joint third with Wrexham, and five points adrift of second placed Shotton who have played one game fewer.

COBRA are away to Newtown on Saturday in a double header that counts as a league match and also the semi-final of the Mid Wales Cup.

After that, they visit Rhyl and Shotton Steel, while they still have to rearrange their home clash against Denbigh which was postponed a couple of weeks ago. That game could be played in midweek.

Earlier in the week, COBRA booked their place in the final of the Mid Wales Cup with a hard-fought 14-12 win over Builth Wells Seconds.

The Llanfair side looked to be in charge after opening up a 14-point lead with tries from Lee Hughes and Ieuan Williams, both converted by Will Worthington.

But the Spa men hit back to reduce the arrears with a couple of touchdowns themselves, only to fall just short at the end.

Third-bottom **WELSHPOOL**, who had no game in division two (north) last weekend, again have no action on Saturday before heading to Abergele the following week as they look to complete a double against the league strugglers.

Meanwhile, Llanidloes completed a quickfire double over Bangor in the Welsh League division



COBRA full-back Richard Jones bursts over the line for one of his four tries. ■ Picture: Gary Williams

two (north) when easing to a 45-0 bonus point win away to the north Wales side.

Having defeated the same opponents 40-7 at home the previous week, Llani again proved too strong in the return to cement fifth spot in the table with five games remaining.

The return on the coast proved a far more forward orientated affair, with the visitors running in seven tries, five of which were converted by Adam Price.

No8 Gareth Anwyl bagged the first touchdown, second row Dave Pugh then crossed, with Price adding the extras, before blindside flanker Gary Horrigan

also went over for a converted score to make it 19-0 at the interval.

After a slow start to the second period, Llani increased their margin with right wing Carwyn Williams crossing the whitewash, converted by Price, before Pugh got his second try.

Two late tries from left wing Jordan Phillips and scrum half Jamie Naylor, both converted by Price, sealed a commanding 45-0 win.

Llani will look to continue the momentum with two games coming up against lower league sides, the first at home to Abergele on Saturday.

Church A bowlers get flying start on return

CHURCH A marked their return to the top flight of the Oswestry and District Bowls League with a 7-3 home success against Chirk A.

John Roberts and Steve Turner, who won to seven and eight respectively, led the way as last season's second division runners-up took the aggregate by 142-115.

Whittington A chalked up an emphatic 8-2 (161-93) success over visitors Flexsys A on the opening night in which they recorded four single figure wins, Aled Davies (21-3) notching the best result.

Llanymynech A, looking to build on last season's creditable campaign, went down 8-2 (136-114) at Ruabon A, with their replies coming from Kieran Jones and Paul Smith, who won to two and eight respectively.

Ceirig Valley A launched the defence of the title at Corwen A on a losing note as they succumbed 7-3, with the aggregate going in favour of the hosts 144-133.

Elsewhere, Cynwyd A were edged out 6-4 (141-122) at Criftons A while Johnstown A ran out 7-3 (139-129) victors at Johnstown A.

Weston Rhyn were the night's biggest winners as they swept aside Ellesmere A 9-1 (152-80) to sound an early warning in division two.

Sue Taylor led the charge with a whitewash, the consistent Andrew Riley winning 21-2 while Doug McCoy (21-5) bagged a consolation for the visitors.

Merv Roberts secured a 21-0 success as George overcame visitors Ye Olde Crofte A 7-3 (147-92), Lance Leonard and Carleton Leonard both 21-2 winners.

Llanrhaeadr A finished all square 5-5 at home to Plas Kynaston A after losing the aggregate by just three shots (130-127). Steve Jones won 21-6, and Mel Roberts (21-9) was another single figure performer.

The first night's action saw Church B slip to an 8-2 reverse at Llangynog A, with replies from Graham Mansfield (21-14) and Will Lewis (21-18) unable to prevent a 158-116 aggregate loss.

Elsewhere in division two, Criftons B prevailed 7-3 (152-134) against their own C team, while there was another all club encounter as Johnstown B secured a 7-3

Ifton get up and running with first win

IFTON gained their first win of the campaign in the Salop Leisure Shropshire Premier Bowls League after a closely fought encounter with visitors Chester Road.

Although the St Martins side ran out 10-4 winners, it was nip and tuck for most part before going on to take the aggregate by just six shots (207-201).

Looking to bounce back from their 13-1 opening night reverse at Burway, they recorded several good wins, with the best results of the night seeing Leighton Roberts and Dave Bond both record 21-12 verdicts.

Martin Jones, Nicky Jones and Geraint Williams all prevailed to 13, while Dicky Jones secured his second win of the season when overcoming Paul Griffiths 21-16.

But the Roaders had a couple of strong single figure wins themselves through Chris Stretch (21-6) and Gary Beff (21-8) to stay in the hunt in the aggregate.

Ifton, who are second bottom in the table, now face a trip to Hanwood on Friday as they look to build on last week's display.

Sir John Bayley currently lead the table after their 14-0 (252-179) mauling of visitors Meole Brace, while Wrockwaine Wood are joint top after a closely fought 8-6 (208-205) win away to Wem USC.

New Saints Ladies left tied up in Notts

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

Rania Ramadan fired against the post.

The reprieve did not last long as the hosts were ahead on three minutes when a cross from the right by Honor Cantrell was deflected into the net off defender Steph Taylor.

That lead was doubled on 27 minutes as Kimmie Harford's ball over the top found Cantrell who drove into the left of the box before firing towards goal. Although keeper Stacey Garnham made the save, the rebound fell to Ramadan to force the ball home.

It was 3-0 eight minutes before half time when Laura Turner broke through before releasing Beth Bailey who lashed a shot into the top corner.

Despite TNS making changes at half time, Kayleigh Almer netted a fourth on 69 minutes when converting a Danni Sauter cross, before the Saints bagged a consolation seven minutes from time when Kim Bebbington headed in a corner from the right by Phoebe Davies. After their record breaking 12-0 win against Leicester City Ladies the week before, defeat against their Nottinghamshire opponents was a real let down for the Saints.

"Congratulations to Radcliffe Olympic who I thought played terrifically well on the day," said TNS Ladies manager Andy Williams.

"To criticise my players would be wrong, it is more about how well our opponents played today.

"We weren't great, we know that. For us to improve as a team, as a club we have to find a higher level of consistency. We shall continue to work as

Guils keep pace after a stirring fightback

GUILDSFIELD kept alive their hopes of runners-up spot in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance after staging a stirring fightback to secure a 3-2 win over Gresford Athletic.

The Guils had twice trailed in a game switched to the Rock, the 4G home of Cefn Druids, but showed plenty of resolve to run out victors with Jake Cook settling the issue seven minutes from.

A curling 25-yard strike from Tom Freeman gave the Laties an interval lead, before the second half saw a flurry of four goals in the space of just 10 minutes.

In a game that was a fine advert for the league, the Mid Wales men enjoyed plenty of possession after the break as they pushed for a leveller.

And it finally arrived on 73 minutes when defender Robbie James lashed home a leveller before being substituted with a head injury.

Jake Eyre restored the Gresford advantage two minutes later when being afforded plenty of space, but Guilsfield were immediately back on terms courtesy of Asa Hamilton who headed home a Cook cross.

The two then combined for the winner on 83 minutes as Hamilton's lay-off gave Cook time to find the net.

The Guils remain fourth, and are five points behind second placed Airbus Broughton with two games to play.

Meanwhile, Caerws failed to halt Caernarfon Town's title march as they slipped to a 2-0 home loss to the champions-elect.

Little has gone right for the Bluebirds this season, and they were again left to rue their back luck after losing two goalkeepers through injury.

First, Dave Jones was injured in the warm-up, and his replacement Luke Evans then dislocated his finger, with central defender Ryan Davies taking over between the posts after just 10 minutes.

Caernarfon were already two goals up by then with Rhys Roberts heading in after the ball had come off the bar, and Darren Thomas' cross then floated in at the far post to double the lead moments later.

Welshpool ease through to cup semi

WELSHPOOL Town stormed into the semi-final of the Spar Mid Wales League Cup after brushing aside Radnor Valley 5-1 at Maesydre.

Leading marksmen Will Thomas and Adam Davies both scored twice, plus an Ian Macleod header, to seal an ultimately comfortable win.

The sides had been level at the break, but three goals early in second half put paid to the Valley men.

Pool's chances of lifting the league's first division crown may be fading, but they have realistic hope of landing some silverware this term.

In the last four, they now take on Aberaeron who were emphatic 5-1 winners away to Carno. The tie will be played at a neutral venue next month.

Holders Berriew's defence of the trophy ended after being edged out 1-0 at Bow Street whose Andrew Gittins put paid to the depleted visitors with the only goal of the game.

Bow Street now meet either Llanfair United or Knighton Town in the other semi-final, with the remaining last four place to be settled on Saturday, May 5.

Meanwhile, Welshpool's Will Thomas continues to lead the way in the Spar League first division goal charts with a total of 31.

His tally includes 28 in the league and three in the cup, with teammate Adam Davies second, five goals behind on 26 (with 21 in the league and five in the cup).

Four-star Town net a welcome victory

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

FC OSWESTRY Town secured a long overdue a victory in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one after producing one of their best results of the season in hammering Holker Old Boys 4-0 at Park Hall.

Town never looked back after taking a 13th minute lead in the sunshine when Sam Pickering found Joe Newton on the right, with the ball crossed to Sam Spridgeon to tap in from five yards.

Another pass from Pickering on the half hour again found Spridgeon who in turn beat his marker before finding Newton who crashed the ball into the top corner from just inside the box.

Holker struggled to create many chances, although Craig Redhead rattled the bar with a 20-yard free kick six minutes into the second half.

However, there was no way back for the Cumbrians once the hosts added a third through Tom Rowlands on 64 minutes.

After latching onto an Ed Moss through ball, Rowlands was brought down in the box by Josh Woodend and, although his penalty was saved by keeper Chris Pearce, the front runner fired home the rebound.

Substitute Brendon Price, guesting from St Martins, wrapped up a comfortable 4-0 margin 12 minutes from time when forcing the ball over the line just moments after coming on the pitch.

It's been a frustrating second half of the season for the Oswestry side who, disrupted by no fewer than 11 postponements, have not won in the league since defeating Chadderton 1-0 back on January 6.

So, still with eight league games remaining, victory was just the tonic for Ryan Butcher's side who have moved up one place to 14th in the table.

They now face a tricky trip away to Sandbach United on Wednesday night before visiting Stockport Town on Saturday.

Earlier in midweek, they went down 2-0 at home to Prestwich Heys who wrapped up the points with two first half strikes to boost their promotion prospects.

Town were chasing the game as early as the fourth minute when Max White sent a free kick from the left to the far post and captain Jacob Woods headed past keeper Louis Mackin.

The hosts suffered a blow moments later when forward Gary Meredith went off with a wrist injury, but went close to a reply when a scuffed shot from Ryan Jones was dealt with by keeper Michael Smith.

However, they went further behind seven minutes before half time when Alfie Belcher latched onto a White free kick before running through and drilling his shot past Mackin.

Prestwich had strong claims for a penalty rejected just on half time following a challenge by Matty Woodward on Ashley Stott who himself was booked for diving.

The Oswestry men battled to retrieve the game in the second period, and had an opportunity midway through the half when Ed Moss released Tom Rowlands who fired wide with a low shot from 20 yards. Mackin then pulled off a terrific save from Stott late on to deny play-off hopefuls Prestwich a third goal.

Elite club enjoy golden weekend



Daryl Small (left) and Matt White, of Team Elite Oswestry, who struck gold in the NAGA world BJJ (Brazilian jiu jitsu) competition

TEAM Elite's fighters have added more titles to their growing collection after enjoying major success in two martial arts competitions.

Representing the Oswestry club, Daryl Small made his mark by grabbing a double gold in the return of NAGA (the world's largest grappling tournament) to the UK.

Fighting in Walsall, Small - who is the beginners BJJ (Brazilian jiu-jitsu) instructor at Elite - proved too hot to handle after submitting all his opponents to recapture the flyweight expert belt for the second year running.

Also representing Elite, Matt White moved up a skill bracket, managing to place first in his No-Gi division and second in his

Gi division.

The following day, some of Team Elite's up-and-coming grapplers did themselves proud when competing at 10th Planet Redditch.

Through pure grit and determination, they all gained valuable experience in their first jiu-jitsu matches, with the club's seasoned professional Daryl Small coming away with the win in his category to make for a golden weekend.

Meanwhile, head coach, Rich Cosgrove, who has been in Japan to gain valuable insight by training with some of the top fighters in the world, has now returned to pass that knowledge on to the Team Elite club.

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is a martial art and combat sport system that

focuses on grappling, and especially ground fighting. It came to be its own combat sport through the experiments, practices and adaptation of judo.

BJJ promotes the concept that a smaller, weaker person can successfully defend themselves or another against a bigger, stronger, heavier assailant by using proper technique, leverage, and most notably, taking the fight to the ground, and then applying joint locks and chokeholds to defeat the opponent.

BJJ training can be used for sport grappling tournaments and in self-defence situations.

■ To find out more about Team Elite go online at <http://elite-martial-arts.net> or contact Rich Cosgrove on 07970-856002.

Player-boss nets five for goal-crazy Llanrhaeadr

THE goals flowed as Llanrhaeadr tightened their grip on the Spar Mid Wales League division one title race with a 9-0 beating of struggling Machynlleth.

Player boss Marc Griffiths led the stroll in the spring sunshine by netting five of the goals, with Iwan Matthews weighing in with a hat-trick and Khyam Wyton completing the tally.

With previous leaders Welshpool Town in league cup action, the victory took Llan to the top of the table on goal difference - and with no fewer than five games in hand on the Maesydre side.

They never looked back once Griffiths bagged the first on 18 minutes, before adding his second seven minutes later when finishing off a terrific team move.

The experienced striker then completed his hat-trick inside the half hour when dispatching a rebound following a shot from Matthews, before Wyton got in on the act with a strike on 36 minutes.

Matthews made it five at the break from an Iain Edmunds cross, and Edmunds was again the provider for Griffiths to notch his fourth after the interval.

Griffiths then headed his fifth on the hour, and two minutes later Matthews made it 8-0, before the forward completed his treble five minutes from time courtesy of a Dan Graham assist.

With eight games remaining, Llanrhaeadr need just 10 points to seal the crown, and possible promotion to the Cymru Alliance.

Third placed Llanidloes Town lost ground after slumping to a surprise 3-0 defeat at Kerry who produced one of their best displays of the season to ease their basement concerns.

Ben Davies opened the scoring before squaring for Matt Mumford to double the lead at the break. Luke Mumford then settled the issue with a penalty in the second period.

Llanfair United cemented fourth spot after their 2-0 home success against Llandrindod Wells with Gethin Stephens and Ben Jones on target.

Knighton Town's hopes of a top six finish suffered a blow after their 3-2 home reverse to Tywyn Brynrcrug in the other first division action.

Leaders Llansantffraid Village remain on course for promotion from division two after winning 4-1 away to Talgarth Town.

They are fourth points clear of second placed Builth Wells who, with four games in hand, kept up the pressure with a 3-0 victory over Abermule.

Elsewhere, Hay St Mary's finished 1-1 away to Dolgellau while Montgomery were edged out 2-1 at home to Presteigne.

*Earlier in the week, Llanfair United suffered a last-gasp 4-3 loss at Berriew despite taking the lead on three occasions.

Stef Rogers pounced for the winner in the last minute to cap a spirited display from the Rhiewsidiers in a thrilling encounter.

United took the lead the first time through a Paul Griffiths penalty after Andy Hughes was brought down, but Berriew equalised on half hour through Jake Mann.

Gethin Stephens restored Llanfair's advantage just before half

Celtic out but Saints champs

GOBOWEN Celtic bowed out of the Shropshire League Premier Cup with a 4-1 exit to high flying Oakengates Athletic in their semi-final at Park Hall, Chris Bishop getting the reply.

■ St Martins Village, meanwhile, clinched the Shropshire Premier League division one crown in their last game with a 14-1 thrashing of struggling Denso.

Super Saints too hot for Bala again

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

"We looked comfortable on the ball, created a lot of chances, and it could have been a bigger scoreline.

"It's the fourth time we've been them this season. We told the lads to go out, enjoy themselves and work hard and get the three points. The only disappointment was that we did not keep a clean sheet.

"We now want to win our remaining two games and finish with as big a gap as possible at the top."

Having slipped up against Bangor City in their previous outing, the Saints were keen to make amends against a side they had already defeated three times this season - all by 3-0 margins.

The league leaders were soon in the ascendancy following Brobbel's fine 18-yard strike after the home defence had been found wanting.

TNS continued to boss the early stages, and threatened further, although Bala went close to a reply when Kieran Smith put the ball wide when well placed.

But it was the visitors who looked the more inci-

sive, moving the ball at speed, and their endeavours saw Draper, the Welsh Premier's top scorer, add a second on 28 minutes when turning the loose ball home after his initial effort had been saved by Ashley Morris.

Bala started to get a foothold in the game, and enjoyed some good pressure, but failed to find a decisive final pass as the visitors held firm with relative comfort.

After the break, the slick Saints continued on the front foot, with Dean Ebbe's chip from Draper's deft touch being dealt with by Morris.

A third goal duly arrived just inside the hour when, after again carving the hosts open with a quick break through midfield, Kauber pounced for his second goal in TNS colours when slotting the ball under Morris from close range.

The Estonian striker went close to a second moments later when rattling the bar with a powerful strike from the edge of the box.

Bala kept battling and, after a couple of sorties, reduced the arrears on 73 minutes when Rob Pearson headed the ball back from a corner and Sheridan bundled over the line.

Sport

Martial Arts
Gold medals for
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New Saints looking for Cup revenge

THE Welsh Premier's top two sides again come face to face on Friday night when champions The New Saints tackle Connah's Quay Nomads at Park Hall (7.45) – the sixth meeting between the teams this season.

The Saints, who bagged a seventh successive title a few weeks back, go into the encounter 13 points clear of their visitors who themselves need one point to clinch runners-up spot.

The league leaders will have a score to settle after being knocked out of the Welsh Cup at the hands of the Nomads last month, but they have tended to hold the upper hand against their rivals on their 4G surface.

And boss Scott Ruscoe will be looking for the kind of display that saw the Saints sweep aside Bala Town 4-1 last week to underline their championship credentials.

"Connah's Quay are a strong physical side, and will want to cement second place," he said.

"We have played them five times this season, won three, drawn one and lost one, and tend to do well against them at home.

"We've got two games left, and want to win both to finish with as big a gap as possible at the top, and go into the Champions League with some good form.

"Connah's Quay are the one side who have conceded fewer goals than us this season, so we've given ourselves a target of keeping clean sheets in our last two games. As well as scoring most goals, we want to finish the season having conceded the fewest."

Jamie Mullan and Jon Routledge are set to return after missing the Bala game, but Chris Marriott (knee) and Chris Seargeant (groin) are unlikely to be risked.

After this week's action, TNS' season concludes the following Friday when Cardiff Met University are the visitors to Park Hall.

They will then take a break before starting preparations for the UEFA Champions League on Monday, June 4.

Busy COBRA face trip to local rivals

COBRA face a double-header at Powys rivals Newtown on Saturday as they look to maintain their winning streak.

The Meifod men bid to push for a top three spot in rugby's Welsh League division two (north) this weekend - and at the same time will aim to reach the final of the Mid Wales Cup. With fixtures piling up, the two clubs have agreed that the game will count towards the league as well as the regional cup competition.

With four games remaining, and lying 10th in the South Lincs and Cheshire Two, OSWESTRY look to get back to winning ways at home to another mid-table side Dukinfield on Saturday (3pm).

The Eagles' mixed campaign continued last weekend when slipping to a 42-10 loss at Congleton.

Cricket back – but Oswestry delayed

AFTER weeks of snow and rain, the Shropshire Cricket League will be hoping for some warmer weather when it gets under way on Saturday.

The opening day fixtures in the Shropshire League see Welshpool host Knockin and Kinnerley in division one.

Montgomery - who have dropped down to the second division - entertain Hodnet and Peplow as they chase an instant return to the first division this term.

Ellesmere play host to Shifnal III in the same

CRICKET by John Bridgwater

division, while Cae Glas get underway in division three when they welcome Overton to Gatacre.

In the premier division, Frankton face a tough start at home to defending champions Bomere Heath. All the games get underway at 1pm.

The start of OSWESTRY's Birmingham League division one season has been put back a week following the recent deluge.

The Morda Road side were among 39 member clubs (82 per cent) to vote to delay the league by a week to give more time for grounds to dry out.

The move means that Oswestry's first game at home to Shropshire rivals Bridgnorth in division one will now be played on August Bank Holiday Monday, while their season will officially start away to Himley on April 28.

The club's planned friendly at home to Whitechurch has now been put back to Saturday. Weather permitting it will get underway at 1pm.

DAVIES: AUSSIE RACE SO TOUGH

By Dave Cooper

SUPER-FIT Mid Wales runner Andrew Davies admitted conditions proved 'tough' in the Australian heat after missing out on a Commonwealth Games medal in an energy-sapping marathon.

In stifling temperatures that saw several runners fail to complete the 26.2 mile course on the streets of Gold Coast, Davies crossed the line in two hours 26 minutes and five seconds.

Representing Wales in the last event at the Games, it was a creditable performance from the 38-year-old who came home in 11th position as the thermometer soared to over 30 degrees celsius. He finished nine minutes 19 seconds behind Australia's Michael Shelley, who clocked two hours 16 minutes and 46 seconds on his way to the gold.

Second was Uganda's Munyo Solomon Mutai in 2:19:02, while Scotland's Robbie Simpson picked up a bronze in 2:19:36.

Davies, formerly of Forden who now lives in Newtown, had dreamed of a medal, but despite his stirring efforts and top levels of fitness, it was not to be in the gruelling heat.

"Many thanks to everyone who has said well done after the marathon. I really appreciate it," he said afterwards. "It was a tough race in 30 degrees heat, but I managed to get around!"

A spokesman for the Welsh team paid tribute to the Mid Wales ace, adding: "It was another superb effort in these unbelievably difficult conditions."

Having started out in fell running, Davies - a former Welshpool High School student and Maldwyn Harrier - has seen his career scale new heights in the past few years with success on the global stage making him one of Britain's top endurance runners.

He was 17th in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow four years ago, while last year, he recorded a personal best time of two hours 15.11



Former Forden runner Andrew Davies (right) on the way to a fine 11th place in Australia

seconds when finishing 16th at the London Marathon.

He was hoping to make the leading pack in Sunday's marathon, but the heat on the Gold Coast heat saw him fall off the pace.

Eight runners failed to finish the race, including Scotland's Callum Hawkins who collapsed just over one mile from the end when in sight of victory.

Hawkins had a two-minute lead and looked set

for gold but, after wobbling for several metres, eventually collapsed and hit his head on a road-side barrier. He remained conscious before eventually being helped into an ambulance and spent the night in hospital.

Wales finished seventh in the medal table with a total of 36 (10 gold), with England second with 136 medals (45 gold). Hosts Australia topped the board with 198 (80 gold), and Scotland were eighth after picking up nine golds in their 44.

Town boss happy with overdue win

FC OSWESTRY Town manager Ryan Butcher was delighted for his players after landing a long overdue win in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one.

Goals from Sam Spridgeon, Joe Newton, Tom Rowlands and substitute Brendon Price secured a welcome 4-0 victory over Cumbrians Holker Old Boys at Park Hall.

"Holker are a good side, but in the end we were just that bit stronger than them," he said. "We took our chances and the back four were solid throughout the 90 minutes.

"We deserved a good result like that for the way we've been playing. We've been close in a lot of games, but not been able to get over the finishing line."

It's been a frustrating second half of the season for the Oswestry side who, disrupted by no fewer than 11 postponements, had not won in the league since defeating Chadderton 1-0 back on January 6.

So victory was just the tonic for Butcher's men who now face a tricky trip away to Sandbach United on Wednesday night before visiting Stockport Town on Saturday.

With eight games remaining, Town have moved up one place to 14th in the table and still hoping to push for a top 10 finish.

ST MARTINS were again frustrated by the weather when their Commander Ethelston Cup semi-final clash with Allscott at Whitechurch was called off due to an unplayable pitch at Yockings Park.

Lying fourth in the West Midlands League division one, the Saints returned to their promotion push on Tuesday night when they took on Willenhall Town at Park Hall.

They then welcome Wem Town on Saturday before entertaining Bromyard the following week. The Saints bring the curtain down on the campaign with visits to promotion rivals Newport Town (May 1) and Worcester Raiders (May 3).

Jones lands Spar top boss award

RAY Jones, boss of high flying Llansantffraid Village, has landed the Spar Mid Wales League division two manager of the month award for March.

During the month, the villagers have moved four points clear at the top of the second division, and stand on the brink of securing promotion back to division one.

The second division's player of the month honour went to Newbridge's William Woods, while there was a double celebration for Aberaeron whose Jason Jones and Matthew Davies have been named the first division's manager and player of the month respectively.

In Monday night's action, Dyffryn Banw were edged out 4-3 at home to Aberystwyth University in the second division.

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